MARVEL MASTERWORKS
HOWARD THE DUCK
VOLUME 1

HOWARD THE DUCK
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TRAPPED IN A WORLD HE NEVER MADE!
BECAUSE YOU DEMANDED IT-- THE FABULOUS FIRST ISSUE OF MARVEL'S MOST SENSATIONAL NEW SUPER-STAR!
HOWARD THE DUCK™
BRUNNER
AGAINST SWORD AND SORCERY, HOWARD STANDS SIDE-BY-SIDE WITH THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN!

HOWARD THE DUCK Nos. 1-14,
GIANT-SIZE MAN-THING Nos. 4-5
& MARVEL TREASURY EDITION No. 12
STEVE GERBER & GENE COLAN
WITH FRANK BRUNNER & VAL MAYERIK

MARVEL MASTERWORKS

PRESENTS

HOWARD THE DUCK

VOLUME 1

COLLECTING

HOWARD THE DUCK Nos. 1-14,
GIANT-SIZE MAN-THING Nos. 4-5
& MARVEL TREASURY EDITION No. 12

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WITH FRANK BRUNNER & VAL MAYERIK

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MARVEL MASTERWORKS

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NOS. 1-14, GIANT-SIZE MAN-THING NOS. 4-5
& MARVEL TREASURY EDITION NO. 12

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HOWARD THE DUCK CREATED BY STEVE GERBER & VAL MAYERIK

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OTHER WAYS
BY STUART MOORE

Attention, comic fans young and old, Marvelites and Marveloids, Man-Things and Kidney Ladies and joyously nonbinary hairless apes: You hold in your hands the first true graphic novel.

HAHAHA—I can hear your howls of outrage! The first graphic novel? In the *history of comics?* Ridiculous. What, you ask, about the ancient Egyptian art of hieroglyphics? The groundbreaking serial *Captain Marvel Adventures*' "The Monster Society of Evil"? What about Will Eisner's classic *A Contract with God*, for Baphomet's sake???

Nope. This is it: *Howard the Duck* #1-14, plus specials. As we say in the 21st century: *Fight me!*

Of course, we'll never know how Howard himself would react to that challenge—not the Howard of these pages, anyway. Because that Howard didn't *live* in the 21st century. He was the product of a very specific time in American culture, the singular voice of the man who wrote every word of his early exploits: Steve Gerber.

Even among the groundbreaking writers of mid-1970s comics, Gerber stood out. Fans and readers of the time hailed his searching intelligence, his philosophical playfulness, his meticulous deconstruction of the comics format. Those qualities—described in depth elsewhere, including several of the features in the back of this book—reached their apex in this, his greatest creation.

One thing Gerber was *not* known for was planning ahead. (Another was meeting deadlines.) An example, from this very book is a bit of foreshadowing in issue #2, spelled out in detail in the letter column's next-issue blurb: "can even our feathered fury chicken out, so to speak, when the mysterious Kidney Lady plots his death at the legs and arms of the monstrous Chair-Thing?" None of that ever happened.

So wait, you say. Hold on. Back up the VW microbus. How can we claim this is the world's first graphic novel, when it was clearly plotted on the fly? When this "meticulously intelligent" writer's plans kept changing? When he never knew what was going to happen from one month (or bi-month, at the beginning) to the next?

And what about *A Contract with God*?!

The last one's easy. Eisner's acclaimed graphic novel was published in 1978, the same year Jack Katz's first volume of *The First Kingdom* appeared in book form. That's one year *after Howard the Duck* #14, the final issue collected in this volume.

For the rest, I'm going to have to beg your indulgence while we discuss the relationship at the heart of these stories. I know, I know—this is already reading like one of those comic stories that takes five issues to get to the point. That separates the main characters, lets half of them think the other half is dead or marries one of them off to *LET'S SAY DOCTOR BONG* and then tantalizes the reader for months before resolving things, if it ever does. But I promise you, we're going somewhere. And hey, I've only got one shot at this. I guarantee you won't have to buy *Marvel Masterworks: The Living Mummy* to read the end of this introduction.

So then: Howard and Beverly. Beverly and Howard.

One of the most important sequences in the original *Howard the Duck* didn't appear in the comic book at all. At the height of the duck's popularity, Gerber and his talented collaborator Gene Colan began work on a newspaper strip to complement the comic book. At the time, Sunday strips featured one or two opening panels to allow newspapers to run the strip in different configurations. Since those panels were dropped by most papers, creators tended to treat them as disposable, throwing in weak one-panel gags or repeating the same origin sequence every week.

Not Gerber and Colan. An early pair of panels shows Howard and Beverly Switzler, his human companion, walking past a pair of lovers kissing on a dark park bench. This is followed by a shot of Bev sitting on another bench, tentatively shaking hands with Howard as she says: "How 'bout this: I won't tell you *my* secret sorrows if you keep mum about *yours*." To which he replies: "DEAL!"

An accompanying caption tells us: "There are other ways of loving."

This two-panel vignette bore no connection to the rest of the strip, but Gerber cited it in later days as a crucial look into the pair's relationship. That bond was both very deep and quite fragile, a delicate balance that was often misunderstood by later writers. (I'm speaking here as someone who has both written *Howard the Duck* and edited Gerber's final run on the series, many years after these stories came out.)

Beverly was first suggested by Gerber's frequent collaborator Mary Skrenes, who herself served as the template for the character—see the interview with Skrenes and Samantha Gerber at the end of this volume. As with many elements of the series, it was hard to get a read on Bev from her first appearance in a chain mail bikini, held prisoner in the tower of Pro-Rata, the evil wizard-slash-accountant. This wasn't surprising. Howard himself, an oddity in the grim Marvel universe, was unceremoniously written out of his first appearance in the Man-Thing's comic, before both Gerber and the fans agitated for his return.

In the first, bimonthly issues—the early chapters of this graphic novel—you can see Gerber struggling toward a format. Each story features an almost-obligatory parody of a specific genre: sword and sorcery, sci-fi, martial arts, etc. Issues #3 and #5 deal with Howard's struggles to find a job and fit in on our world, while #2 and #4 each feature an ordinary person who gains super or supernatural powers and finds himself way out of his depth. (The plots of those two issues are remarkably similar, though the treatment and artwork are very different. Gerber seems to have dropped Arthur Winslow as a supporting character in favor of issue #4's Paul Same.)

With issue #6, a number of things happen. The book goes monthly, the format begins to loosen up, and Howard and Beverly take their act on the road. They also have their first big fight. When they're reunited, Howard uses the phrase "Love is strange" to describe his feelings for her. If it all seems a bit rushed, well—those were the days of seventeen-page comic books. Panel space was a precious commodity.

But the form of the larger narrative, the graphic novel, was beginning to take shape. With issue #9, Gerber became editor of the book, granting him a measure of greater autonomy (on paper, at least).

And if this *is* a graphic novel, the Howard/Beverly relationship is absolutely its spine. Again, Gerber was not the sort of writer who kept charts of ascending and descending action on his wall. He once wrote "Characters who cannot change as rapidly, as often, as mercurially as I do anesthetize me. Characters can become institutions devoted to making vegetables out of writers." He was determined not to let that happen to Howard—or, presumably, to Beverly.

But as every writer knows, structures emerge unconsciously. And there's a definite one here, though it's obscured by stunts and parodies and some distinctly odd guest appearances, including Spider-Man and the Defenders.

Beverly and Howard. Howard and Bev. She's a more open character than him, but only to a point. Just like Howard, she approaches intimacy tentatively, sometimes mockingly, as if afraid it'll bite her. In issue #7, she responds to the attack of a gingerbread monster with "Don't try to fight it, Ducky. It's bigger than both of us." It's as if his use of the word "love" has scared her a bit, to the point where she can only express her feelings through jokes.

A brief aside about female characters in comics of this time: A lot of them weren't great. Some of the most popular seemed to serve as the (invariably male) writer's idea of the perfect girlfriend. And while Gerber was doing something much more textured and interesting here, he did fall into that trap from time to time. At least his idea of the perfect girlfriend was more interesting, more human than most. The type of person who would respond to a villain's proposal of marriage (in issue #17) with "Wh-*what?!* Marry *you??* Jeez—marry *anybody??*"

A warning to those readers who have not read these stories before: We're about to get spoilery. Okay, okay. *More* spoilery.

In response to the scarcity of *Howard the Duck* #1—one of the first comics to be bought up in bulk by speculators hoping to resell it at a profit—Marvel reprinted the issue in a large-format treasury edition. This special also featured a new story teaming up Howard and Beverly with the Defenders, a super hero team Gerber had recently written for a long stretch. "The Duck and the Defenders" is arguably the lightest story in this volume, featuring a team of absurdist villains and a hell of a lot of slapstick combat. But it has a bite to it: Early on in the story, Howard asks Doctor Strange to send him back to his homeworld.

Strange agrees this is possible, but asks Howard about Beverly and about his bid to become president of the United States. Howard replies flippantly, "Same answer for both: I hadda occupy my time on this world or I'd go crazy." But ultimately, he decides to stay. Then, in issue #8, he hustles Beverly out of Strange's home as quickly as possible.

This has the happy side effect of preventing the Defenders from becoming supporting players in Howard's comic. But the real reason—not stated on the page—is that Howard clearly doesn't want Bev to learn what he's just given up returning for her. It's not something he can discuss with her at this stage of their relationship. He wouldn't just be burdening her with his "secret sorrow," he'd be laying it right at her feet.

The evolution of Howard, the comic and the character, continued in other ways. In issue #9, Howard refuses to battle the villainous Le Beaver on physical terms. In a subsequent letter column, Gerber explains: "My intent was to remove HTD from the hero-villain mold, so that the stories relied less on physical combat to determine their outcome. Howard's refusal to step out on that tightrope over Niagara Falls in issue #9 was, for me, a symbolic act—and for Howard himself, a victory." Gerber acknowledges, however, that the decision not to fight leads the character to a nervous collapse...

...which brings us to the final chapters of this (yes!) graphic novel. Issues #10-14 pull together most of the book's threads to date, introducing young psychic Winda Wester and bringing back the Kidney Lady, Reverend Yuc and his cult of Yuccies and somnambulist writer Paul Same. Daimon Hellstrom, Adolf Hitler and the rock band KISS (!) make appearances too, as Howard's mental illness threatens to engulf him. And things get a bit dark.

At the story's climax, under the influence of Daimon Hellstrom's Satanic second persona, Howard seeks out Beverly and intimidates her. It's a disturbing scene, easy to gloss over because it's so brief. But it shows that the bond they share has a real dark side, and that Howard's insecurities make it nearly impossible for him to trust anyone. First he pulls her by the hair and tells her, "Your agonies have only begun." Then, as he grabs her wrist and forces her to her knees:

"What do I mean to you? Do you like me—or cherish me—or perhaps I merely amuse you? Am I your object of ridicule, sweet? AM I??"

This is heavy, nasty stuff, even for a character literally possessed by the devil. And when you read all the stories together, it's not a stretch to see it as a consequence of Howard's decision, in "The Duck and the Defenders" to stay with Beverly instead of allowing Doctor Strange to send him home. Maybe he should have talked to her about it after all. Maybe, sometimes, secret sorrows *should* be shared.

The Howard/Bev resolution here is ambiguous. Howard experiences a sort of cosmic awareness, "leading a thousand lives at once—perceiving the universe through senses and sensibilities not his own," which shocks him back down to Earth. He and Bev find themselves reunited with Paul Same ("Do I get to keep them?") and Winda, forming a family unit that becomes very important in later issues even as Gerber keeps blasting it apart, again and again. Bev says—with a great Gene Colan glare, delivered over a cup of coffee—"Tell 'em we promise to hold weekly group therapy sessions," which, all things considered, sounds like a pretty good idea.

And so ends the graphic novel.

The next phase of *Howard the Duck*, while brilliant, didn't come together as neatly. Gerber scattered the characters far and wide then left the book in a widely publicized split with Marvel before he could reunite them. He never got to the promised return of Hitler and Reverend Yuc—though it's very possible that one might have gone the way of the Chair-Thing, either way.

So there you have it: the medium's first true graphic novel. Fight me! Or don't. What would Howard do? In the year 2020, would he step out over the falls to battle Le Beaver over an obscure matter of bibliographic terminology or retreat to struggle with his own inner demons in some latter-day padded cell?

We'll never know. But we know what he did back *then*…and it starts on the very next page.

– Stuart Moore
Quarantined States of America
September 2020

Stuart Moore is a writer, a book editor and an award-winning comics editor. His novels include three volumes of The Zodiac Legacy*, cowritten with Stan Lee. Recent comics include* Captain Ginger *(AHOY),* Batman: Nightwalker *(DC Ink) and the Howard-adjacent* Deadpool the Duck.

FEAR

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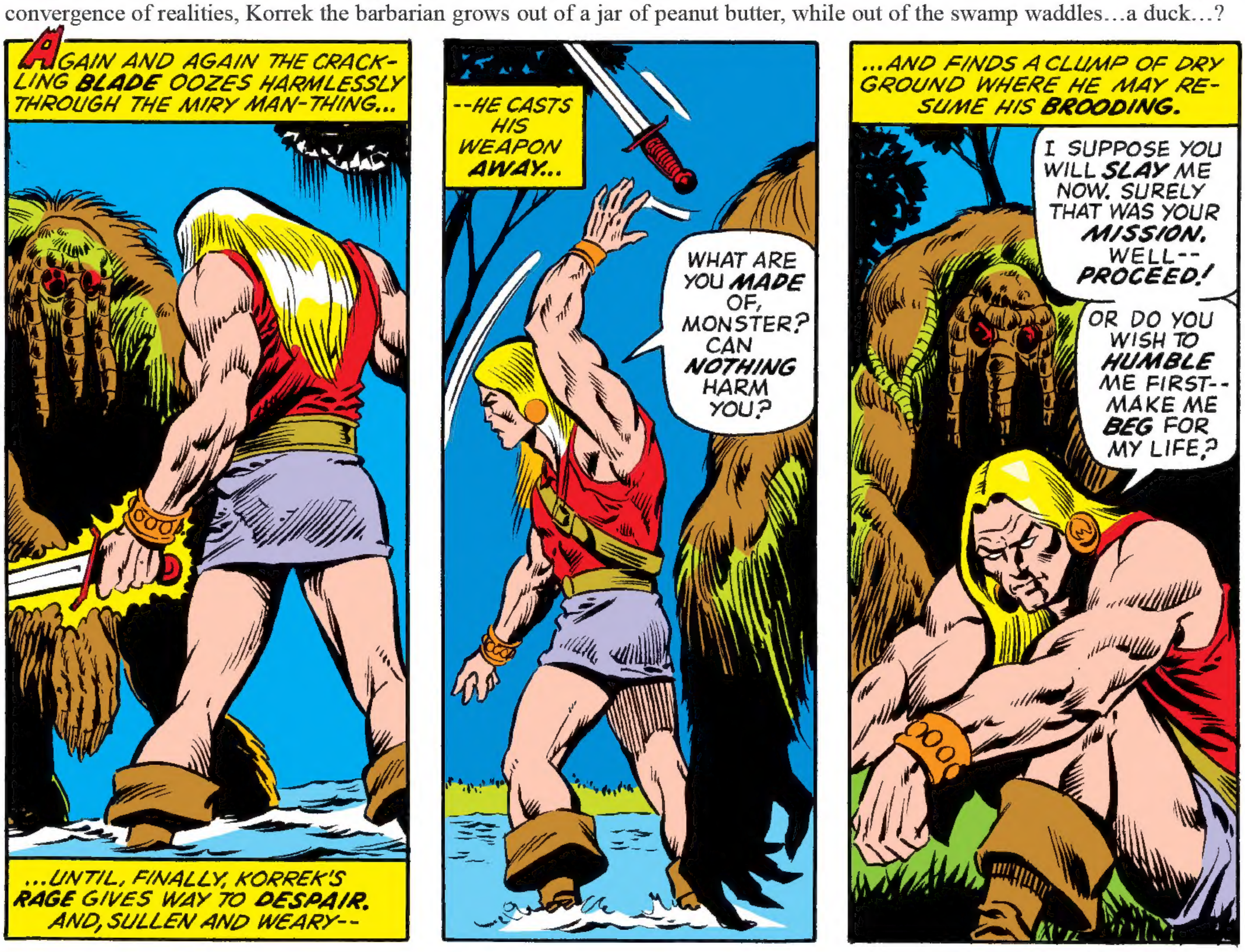
ADVENTURE INTO FEAR™

WITH

THE MAN-THING™

THE LAND BETWEEN NIGHT AND DAY

The Nexus of All Realities is in chaos! The swamp where the shambling Man-Thing dwells has been disturbed by construction, and beings from one reality are suddenly appearing in another. As Dakimh the Enchanter and Jennifer Kale try to stop a catastrophic convergence of realities, Korrek the barbarian grows out of a jar of peanut butter, while out of the swamp waddles…a duck…?


AGAIN AND AGAIN THE CRACK-LING BLADE OOZES HARMLESSLY THROUGH THE MIRY MAN-THING...
...UNTIL, FINALLY, KORREK'S RAGE GIVES WAY TO DESPAIR. AND, SULLEN AND WEARY--
--HE CASTS HIS WEAPON AWAY...
WHAT ARE YOU MADE OF, MONSTER? CAN NOTHING HARM YOU?
...AND FINDS A CLUMP OF DRY GROUND WHERE HE MAY RE-SUME HIS BROODING.
I SUPPOSE YOU WILL SLAY ME NOW. SURELY THAT WAS YOUR MISSION. WELL-- PROCEED!
OR DO YOU WISH TO HUMBLE ME FIRST-- MAKE ME BEG FOR MY LIFE?
WELL, I'LL NOT GIVE YOU THAT SATISFACTION! AT THIS POINT, I WELCOME DEATH!
WHAT ELSE IS THERE--FOR ONE WHOSE LIFE HAS BECOME AN ABSURDITY?
AW, CLAM UP, BUD! YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW THE MEANING OF THE WORD!
FINDING YOURSELF IN A WORLD OF TALKING HAIRLESS APES-- NOW THAT'S ABSURDITY!
OH--NO! WHAT NEW HORROR IS THIS? IT VAGUELY RESEMBLES A DUCK, BUT--!

WHILE, A UNIVERSE AWAY, IN THE SKY-CASTLE...

YOU MEAN--MY EARLIER VISITS HERE WEREN'T DREAMS, DAKIMH?

I WAS ACTUALLY "BLINKING" BACK AND FORTH BETWEEN THIS WORLD AND EARTH DURING MY SLEEP--

--BECAUSE OF THIS PSYCHIC--OR EMPATHIC--OR WHATEVER--POWER I'VE GOT.?

FAR OUT... I WAS SANE ALL ALONG. FOR ONCE, IT REALLY WAS THE REST OF THE WORLD THAT WENT BONKERS! I WAS SO AFRAID THAT--

PUT THOSE FEARS TO REST, JENNIFER. ALL I'VE TOLD YOU IS TRUE.

AND WE MUST TURN TO OTHER MATTERS.

LIKE STOPPING THIS CRAZINESS, I HOPE!

PRECISELY. FOR YOU WERE NOT ITS ONLY VICTIM, CHILD. BEINGS FROM ALL THE PLANES OF EXISTENCE HAVE BEEN AFFECTED.

LIKE THOSE SOLDIERS--AND KORREK, HUH?

AYE--AND MILLIONS MORE--BLINKING OUT OF THEIR OWN REALITIES AND INTO ALIEN ONES.*

*WHICH EXPLAINS BOTH THE PEANUT BUTTER AND THE DUCK. --R.T.

AND WE FACE ANOTHER--POTENTIALLY GREATER--THREAT, ALSO:

A CONGRESS OF TYRANTS WHO HOPE TO GAIN DOMINION OVER ALL REALITY--UNLESS WE HALT THEM.

WHAT IS IT YOU'RE LOOKING UP?

IS THAT A BOOK OF SPELLS, OR JUST AN ENCYCLOPE--

DAKIMH! LOOK OUT!!

THAT'S SOME KIND OF BOMB!!

TO BE SPECIFIC: THE KIND THAT EXPLODES, BRINGING DOWN IN FRAGMENTS THE STONE WALLS AND CEILING--!

AND WHEN THE RESULTANT DUST CLEARS...

DAKIMH! HELP! I'M CAUGHT UNDER THE RUBBLE!

DAKIMH! ARE YOU OKAY? CAN YOU HEAR ME? OR--OH, NO!

HE'S DONE IT AGAIN! HE'S GONE!!

DON'T LET THAT TROUBLE YA, WENCH! WE'LL FIND 'IM--

Y-YESSIR! SPREAD OUT, MEN!

--OR WE'LL GET OUR HEADS LOBBED OFF --WON'T WE, YA NO-GOOD SLOBBERIN' DOGS?

PERSONNEL DEPLOYED FOR SEARCH-AND DESTROY OPERATIONS, SIR!

GOOD! NOW DIG THE GIRL OUTTA THAT HEAP! SHE'S COMIN' WITH US!

WE CAN'T RISK HER WRECKIN' OUR CONGRESS OF REALITIES, EITHER!

S-SIR...WE'VE TURNED THE CASTLE INSIDE OUT. THERE'S NO SIGN OF THE MAGICIAN, SIR.

HE--HE MUST'VE ESCAPED TO ANOTHER REALITY. I MEAN, HE IS A MAGICIAN, SIR.

SIR...?

SHUT UP! YOU CAN DISCUSS IT LATER--WITH THE OVERMASTER!

TO THE CASTLE BATTLEMENTS--ALL OF YOU! AND BRING THE GIRL! WE'RE FINISHED HERE.

IT'S TIME WE CLEARED OUT!

WE HEAR AND OBEY, WARLORD AKILLA! TO THE BALLOONS, MEN!

I DON'T BELIEVE I AM SEEING THIS....!

WAIT!!

AT LEAST TELL ME *WHERE* YOU'RE TAKING ME--AND *WHY!* I'M *ENTITLED* TO THAT!

VERY WELL, THEN--WE'RE TAKING YOU TO OUR *CONGRESS*-- TO *DIE!*

NOW...DID THAT PUT YOU MORE *AT EASE?*

DAKIMH--*HOW* COULD YOU DESERT ME *NOW?* UNLESS...YOU *INTENDED...!*

*AND THE BIZARRE SITUATION IN THE SWAMP IS ABOUT TO BECOME **EQUALLY** AS DESPERATE AS JENNIFER'S--!*

WE *AGREE,* THEN, DUCK-- TO SEARCH TOGETHER FOR A WAY *OUT* OF THIS *SLOUGH*--

--BACK TO OUR *OWN* WORLDS, WHERE'ER THEY MAY BE.!

CUT THE SPEECH SHORT AND *MARCH,* KORREK!

NO! NOT AIMLESSLY! THIS BOG IS *HUGE.* WE MIGHT--

AIEEEE!

ZOKK! DID YOU *HEAR* THAT, DUCK? THE SOUND OF OTHER *MEN! SALVATION!*

WE MUST FIND ITS *SOURCE!*

YOU'RE GOING TO FOLLOW *THAT?* YOU'RE *CRAZY!* YOU WANT TO GET *KILLED?*

BUT KORREK FEARS NOTHING--AND DESIRES ESCAPE ABOVE ANYTHING--AND SO HE TRAMPS ON--CHASING THE SOUND--

--AND THE DUCK AND THE QUAG-DWELLER FOLLOW AT HIS HEELS.

AND SOON, TO THEIR UNQUALIFIED REGRET, THEY LOCATE THE ORIGIN POINT OF THE SCREAM:

THE F.A. SCHIST CONSTRUCTION CAMP--BESIEGED BY THINGS THAT SLITHER, THINGS THAT CRAWL, THINGS THAT SWARM THE SKY ON LEATHERN WINGS!

DEMONS--IN THE SERVICE OF THE MYSTERIOUS OVERMASTER!

BEHOLD, O MY BROTHERS--THE ONE WE HAVE COME TO DESTROY HAS ARRIVED! THE BEING SPAWNED BY THE SWAMP'S MYSTIC FORCES!

ZOKK AND MAFTRA! HE MEANS THE MONSTER--WHOM WE THOUGHT AN ENEMY!!

KILL HIM--AND WE OPEN THE GATES TO THE CONQUEST OF ALL!

THEN NO MORE WORDS NEED BE SPAKE, SAVE--

ATTACK!

AS ONE, THE DEADLY DROVE LURCHES FORWARD--SNARLING, SCREECHING--EAGER FOR THE JOY OF SLAUGHTER...

...COSMIC BUTCHERS CRAVING MURKISH FLESH!

NEXT: THE SANITY-RENDING CONCLUSION FEATURING ALMOST EVERYTHING IN THE UNIVERSE, AND... THE BATTLE FOR THE PALACE OF THE GODS!

MAN-THING

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THE MOST STARTLING SWAMP-CREATURE OF ALL!

THE MAN-THING

NOW IN HIS OWN MAGAZINE!
FEAR-FRAUGHT FIRST ISSUE!

BRVNNER

Stan Lee PRESENTS: MAN-THING! ™

STEVE GERBER, WRITER / VAL MAYERIK, ARTIST / SAL TRAPANI, INKER / JOHN COSTANZA, letterer / DAVE HUNT, colorist / ROY THOMAS, EDITOR

THE SCENE IS THE F.A. SCHIST CONSTRUCTION CAMP ON THE EDGE OF THE SWAMP-- AND THE SITUATION, SIMPLY STATED, IS THIS: REALITY HAS RUN AMOK! THE CREATURES WHO HAVE SEIZED CONTROL OF THE CRANES AND 'DOZERS ARE DEMONS, IN THE SERVICE OF THE MYSTERIOUS OVERMASTER, WHO SEEKS TO RULE THE UNIVERSE. AND THOSE WHO STAND AGAINST HIM ARE A BARBARIAN PRINCE, A DISTURBINGLY "HUMAN" DUCK... AND THE MACABRE MAN-THING! AND THIS IS BUT A PRELUDE TO THE...

BATTLE for the PALACE of the GODS!

THEY SLITHER, THEY STAGGER, THEY SWOOP FROM THE SKY, THESE MINIONS OF DOOM!

AND YET..

...THE INTENT OF EACH IS THE SAME: DESTROY THE THING FROM THE SWAMP!

AT THE INSTANT OF HIS DEATH-- THE OVERMASTER CLAIMS THE UNIVERSE! ATTACK!!

WITH FANG AND BEAK, TALON AND TENTACLE--

--THEY POUNCE UPON THE SLIME-DWELLER--TEARING, GNAWING, CLAWING AT HIM--

--SLOWLY EATING AWAY AT THE MURKISH UN-FLESH OF WHICH MAN-THING IS MADE!

MORE OF THEM SPRING FORWARD TO ATTACK! FOLLOW ME, DUCK-- WE'LL WARD THEM OFF!

DON'T BE AN IDIOT, KORREK! WE CAN'T FIGHT THIS!

BUT THE WARRIOR PRINCE OF THE WESTLANDS PAYS NO HEED! HE BOUNDS BOLDLY INTO THE FRAY, HIS SWORD SPEWING ITS MYSTIC FIRE!

AND HE MAKES A MIND-STUNNING DISCOVERY--!

DIE, DEMON! DI--

WHA--? THIS THING... IS NOT ALIVE!

BEHOLD, DUCK! IT IS HOLLOW, LIKE A CHILD'S DOLL!

BEHIND THEIR FEAR-SOME VISAGE, THERE IS NO SUBSTANCE!

AND BEFORE THE CRACKLING SWORD OF KORREK-- THEY FALL!

LOOK, FEATHERED ONE! WE HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR FROM THESE MADMAN'S TOYS! WE WERE DUPED ONCE-- BUT NO LONGER, EH?

FOR *FEAR* WAS OUR *TRUE* FOE-- AND WE HAVE *SLAIN* IT!

PRAISE BE TO *ZOKK!* KORREK OF KATHARTA STANDS *TRIUMPH-ANT!*

AND WHEN HE *RETURNS* TO THAT FABLED LAND, THE MINSTRELS SHALL *SING* OF THIS D--

OH-- *NO! NO!*

THIS CANNOT *BE!* THE SEVERED PARTS YET *LIVE!*

BARBARIC *FOOL!*

YOU CANNOT KILL A *DEMON* AS YOU WOULD A *MAN!* WE ARE NOT CREATURES OF MERE *FLESH!*

WE ARE OF AN ENTIRELY *DIFFERENT* PHYSICAL NATURE-- AS YOU *NOW* SURELY *KNOW!*

ZOKK AND MAFTRA! IT IS *TRUE!* HIDEOUSLY TRUE!

SCANT YARDS AWAY, THE DUCK IS DRAWN INTO THE CONFLICT--!

UH-OH. *THAT* POOR GUY'S OUT FOR THE *COUNT!*

LIKE IT OR NOT-- HERE'S WHERE I GET *INVOLVED.*

THE DUCK--HOWARD, BY NAME--CASTS HIS BETTER JUDGEMENT TO THE WINDS, AND GRABS UP A GUN OF THE FALLEN WORK-MAN--!

OKAY, CREEPS-- HERE'S WHERE *YOU* GET *YOURS,* SEE?

I HAPPEN TO BE A *CRACK SHOT* -- I NEVER *MISS* --AND--

BAM

:OBOY:

I *GOT* YOU, BLAST IT! RIGHT IN THE *HEART!* WHY AREN'T YOU *DEAD?*

DEMONS DO NOT *DIE,* DUCK! THAT IS FOR YOU *MORTALS* TO DO-- AT OUR HANDS!

THEN, SUDDENLY, THE TIDE OF BATTLE **TURNS**--AS THE MISSHAPEN ONCE-MAN **STRIKES BACK!**

AND HE BENDS THE FIEND'S WIRY FORM OVER **UPON** ITSELF...

HIS MOTTLED ARMS REACH BEHIND HIM--**RIP** THE OUT-WORLDER FROM HIS BACK--!

...AND WIELDS IT LIKE AN ECTOPLASMIC **CLUB,** BEATING BACK THE DEMON'S UNHOLY **BRETHREN**--

--TURNING THEIR UNEARTHLY PHYSICAL NATURE **AGAINST** THEM!

AND NOW, IN A BURST OF **AMBER LIGHT** COMES THE **EQUALIZER** IN THIS COMBAT OF MORTALS-VERSUS-MONSTERS--!

AW, **NO!** WILLYA LOOK AT THIS?! **MORE** LUNACY!

IT--IT'S **HUMAN**-- BUT WHOSE **SIDE** IS IT ON? WHO **IS** IT?

HE IS CALLED DAKIMH THE ENCHANTER-- THE MAGE WHO DWELLS IN THE CASTLE IN THE SKY IN THE LAND BETWEEN NIGHT AND DAY!

AND WITH A PASS OF HIS **HAND** THRU THE AIR...

...HE SUMMONS UP A **WHITE WHIRLWIND** THAT ROARS THRU THE CAMP, SWEEPING THE OVERMASTER'S SCREAMING HORDES INTO ITS **VORTEX!**

AND WHEN EACH AND EVERY DEVILKIN HAS BEEN THUS ENSNARED, THE CONJURER GESTURES AGAIN--

--CAUSING THE WHIRLWIND TO IMPLODE--AND ENDING THE DEMONS' BRIEF REIGN OF TERROR!

WHUK!

BEGONE, YE OGRES--TO YOUR FINAL REST IN THE FLAMING PITS OF SOMINUS! SO SPEAKS DAKIMH!

HOWARD--KORREK--MAN-OBJECT--COME TO ME! WE HAVE A MOST URGENT MISSION TO PERFORM!

HEY, DO YOU KNOW THIS CLOWN, KORREK?

NAY, FRIEND DUCK--AND I AM PUZZLED AT HOW HE KNOWS ME!

THAT GUY'S SCARIER 'N THE DEMONS!

QUIET! AND KEEP THAT GUN LOW!

THERE IS NO CAUSE FOR ALARM, GOOD PRINCE. I AM YOUR ALLY--AND YOU, I PRAY, SHALL SOON BE MINE...

...AS WE FIVE JOIN TO SAVE THE COSMOS!

BAH! I DON'T BELIEVE YOU! IT'S SOME SORCEROUS TRICK!

I BEG YOUR PARDON! THIS IS NO JEST, MY FRIEND! YOU AND THE DUCK HAVE BEEN CHOSEN BY FATE TO AID ME!

THAT IS WHY YOU ARE HERE--IN THE SWAMP--AT THE NEXUS OF ALL REALITIES!

PRECISELY, HOWARD--AND I SHALL EXPLAIN IN FULL--

ARE YOU SAYING THERE'S SOMETHING UNUSUAL ABOUT EACH OF US--THAT DREW US HERE FROM OUR OWN WORLDS, WHISKERS?

--WHEN WE ARE SAFELY ENSCONCED IN MY CASTLE--FAR FROM THE PRYING EYES OF MAN AND DEMON ALIKE! AND SO--

AWAY TO THAT REALM WE GO!

TH-THIS CAN'T BE REAL!

Y'KNOW, I THINK THE DUCK'S LAST WORDS SAY IT ALL--IT COULDN'T'VE BEEN REAL!

WHAT--? WHAT DIDN'T HAPPEN?

THEN WE'RE AGREED. IT--JUST DIDN'T HAPPEN, RIGHT?

RI-I-I-I-GHT!

WE, TOO, MIGHT TERM "IMPOSSIBLE" THE EVENTS THAT HAVE JUST TRANSPIRED... WERE WE NOT ABOUT TO WITNESS **THIS** SCENE!

I AM TOLD THE **OVERMASTER** HIMSELF WILL MAKE AN APPEARANCE TODAY--

--TO PRESIDE OVER THE WITCH-CHILD'S **EXECUTION.**

SO IT IS **SAID,** NORSEMAN.

THE CONGRESS OF REALITIES!! MEN FROM VIRTUALLY **EVERY** PLANE OF EXISTENCE-- BROUGHT TOGETHER BY THEIR COMMON ASPIRATION: **GODHOOD.**

Quid Est Reality?

GODHOOD: DEFINED AS DOMINATION OVER **ALL** THE PLANES OF REALITY FROM THE GREEN PASTURES OF **THEREA** TO THE DARK DOMAIN OF **SOMINUS.**

GODHOOD: IT **BEGINS** FOR THEM WITH THE KILLING OF THIS GIRL... **JENNIFER KALE.**

FOR SHE IS APPRENTICE TO **DAKIMH**-- AND **HE** IS THE FORCE THAT STANDS 'TWIXT THIS CONGRESS AND ITS DIVINE **GOAL.**

SUDDENLY--THE CRY OF CLARION AND BUGLE--!

ALL HAIL! ALL HAIL! ALL HAIL THE **LEADER!**

THE GLORY WHO **WALKS** IS IN OUR MIDST!

THE **OVERMASTER**-- SOON-TO-BE **LORD** OF ALL **REALITY!**

A THUNDEROUS APPLAUSE GREETS HIS COMING, AS HE TAKES HIS PLACE AT THE ROSTRUM.

GLAD TIDINGS, MY FRIENDS! WE STAND UPON THE THRESHOLD OF VICTORY!

ONLY ONE OBSTACLE STANDS BETWEEN OUR FORCES AND THE DIMENSION CALLED THEREA-- HOME OF THE GODS!

THIS SORCERESS IS PART OF THAT OBSTACLE--PART OF DAKIMH'S BAND!

SHE HAS BEEN BROUGHT HERE--TO DIE!

WITH THOSE WORDS, THE OVERMASTER'S FIRING SQUAD ASSEMBLES--WEAPONS AND WARRIORS FROM ACROSS THE SPECTRUM OF SPACE AND TIME--!

YOU, JENNIFER KALE, HAVE BEEN FOUND IN CONTEMPT OF THIS CONGRESS--GUILTY OF PROTECTING THE FREE BALANCE OF EXISTENCE!

PREPARE TO PAY THE PENALTY FOR THAT CRIME! SQUADRON--READY--AIM--

BUT BEFORE THE FINAL COMMAND CAN BE GIVEN--

GOOD LORD! UNLESS MY RADAR SENSE HAS GONE CRAZY--

--HERE COMES DAREDEVIL, THE MAN WITHOUT FEAR!

--WE'RE PASSING THRU SOME KIND OF HOLE IN SPACE!

WE'RE SWINGING RIGHT BACK OUT AGAIN, IT APPEARS!

BUT IN BETWEEN--WE'VE SAVED A LIFE! SEE THAT GIRL?

THOK

FAM

D.D AND THE WIDOW WILL WONDER ABOUT THAT EXPERIENCE UNTIL THE END OF THEIR DAYS, YET, IT PALES BESIDE--THIS

OH--NO! MY BODY!

IT'S MELTING! TURNING INTO WATER! HELP!!

WHILE, ONE DIMENSION BELOW THE MANIACAL CONGRESS --

AH! MY SPELL HAS BEEN SUCCESSFUL! OUR FIFTH MEMBER ARRIVES!

ARE YOU MAD, OLD MAN? 'TIS BUT A LEAK IN YOUR CASTLE'S ROOF!

"HARDLY, KORREK--OBSERVE! IT IS THE FEMALE YOU MISTAKENLY ASSUMED WAS YOUR ENEMY--MY APPRENTICE!"

AND PRAISE BE TO THEE, O' GODS OF THEREA, FOR PERMITTING HER SAFE RETURN!

SAVE THE ORAL ROBERTS ACT FOR LATER, DAKIMH. I WANT ANSWERS!

AND WHEN THE TWO HAVE EXCHANGED INCREDIBLE TALES--!

SO, WE'RE ALL FRIENDS NOW--AND OUR JOB IS TO SET RIGHT THE COSMIC AXIS.

THAT'S PEACHY--BUT IT STILL DOESN'T EXPLAIN ABOUT DAREDEVIL!

I KNOW NOT WHO THIS DARE-PERSON IS--BUT I THINK I CAN ACCOUNT FOR HIS APPEARANCE.

IMAGINE, CHILD, THAT THE NORMAL STRUCTURE OF REALITY APPEARS THUS:

ASCENDING LEVELS, HELD IN DELICATE BALANCE, A HAIR'S-BREATH APART.

THIS, HOWEVER, IS ITS CURRENT STATE--CHAOS! EVERY LEVEL COLLAPSED UPON ANOTHER.

WHERE ANY TWO OF THOSE LEVELS TOUCH, A JUNCTURE POINT IS CREATED--A DIMENSIONAL BRIDGE, OF SORTS.

I GET IT! D.D AND THE WIDOW PASSED THRU ONE OF THOSE JUNCTURE POINTS TOTALLY BY ACCIDENT, AND--!

EXACTLY! THEY CROSSED OVER INTO THE CONGRESS' WORLD. BUT... ENOUGH OF THIS.

WE HAVE A JOURNEY TO BEGIN--NOW!

AND SO, HE LIFTS HIS HAND--

--AND THE WORLD VANISHES!

THERE IS NO NAME FOR WHERE THEY ARE NOW-- EXCEPT PERHAPS... "BETWEEN"!

FOR THIS IS A PLACE **OUTSIDE** REALITY--OUTSIDE BEING!

COME-- WE MUST CLIMB THE STAIR-CASE TO ITS END.

BUT THE GOLDEN STAIRS ONLY WIND THEIR WAY TO --NOWHERE-- TO ANOTHER STATE OF UN-NESS...

...A RIBBON THAT LACES THRU THE BETWEEN, TYING IT TO YET **ANOTHER** KIND OF **NULLITY**--

--STEPPING STONES! AND ABOVE, BENEATH, AND BETWEEN THEM-- **OBLIVION!**

KORREK! DUCK! EXERCISE CAUTION! THE REST OF US ARE **PROTECTED** BY OUR SORCEROUS POWERS!

YOU TWO ARE **NOT** --YOU CAN **DIE** HERE!

DUCK! DID YOU HEAR HIM? GO SLOWER! TAKE TIME TO-- **DUCK!**

NO!!

I--I TRIPPED! I'M **FALLING!!**

DO NOT ATTEMPT TO **FOLLOW,** KORREK, LEST--

BUT-- IS THERE **NOTHING** YOU CAN **DO?**

"For poor Howard—**no**." Nothing could be done. He tumbled through the void. Until…

GIANT-SIZE MAN-THING

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PANIC IN THE CITY... AS THE MOST STARTLING SLIME-CREATURE OF ALL STALKS THE HALLOWED HALLS OF A TERRIFIED HIGH SCHOOL!

EXTRA!

HOWARD THE DUCK FACES DEATH AT THE HANDS OF...

GORKO, THE MAN-FROG

BRUNNER

THERE ARE WORLDS UPON WORLDS ... WORLDS WITHIN WORLDS ... WORLDS WITHOUT END.

EVERY MAN'S MIND IS A UNIVERSE.

AND BETWEEN THOSE UNIVERSES ARE PLACES LIKE THIS, WHERE REALITIES COLLIDE.

WORLDS WHERE ALL AND NOTHING ARE SYNONYMOUS...

...WORLDS NOT MEANT FOR LIVING BEINGS... UNFIT FOR CREATURES WHO MUST REASON...

FOR LOGIC, RATIONALE, EVEN SANITY HAVE NO MEANING HERE.

SO CONSIDER THE PLIGHT OF HOWARD THE DUCK!

FOR MONTHS, BY OUR RECKONING, HE HAS BEEN FALLING THROUGH THIS UN-WORLD, THIS VOID BETWEEN...

...ALONE WITH HIS THOUGHTS IN SOUNDLESS SPACE, LEFT TO WONDER WHETHER OR NOT HE EXISTS.

FROG DEATH!

INTRODUCING A NEW CONCEPT IN COMIC LITERATURE BY

STEVE GERBER *Writer*

FRANK BRUNNER *Artist & Colorist*

TOM ORZ *lettering*

CARL BARKS *spiritual guide*

AS HE DISCOVERS A MOMENT LATER-- **HE DOES.** FOR, BY DEFINITION, ONE CAN ONLY GO **SO FAR** IN A WORLD **BETWEEN.**

IT--IT'S GROUND! **SOLID GROUND!** I'M SITTING ON THE GROUND!! NOT FALLING -- **SITTING!**

AND THERE'S GRASS -- AND TREES -- AND BUILDINGS. I'M **HOME!** I **MADE** IT!

MISTER, ARE YOU ALL **RIGHT?**

OH, SURE -- JUST A LITTLE **SHAKY,** NATCH, BUT IT'S GREAT TO BE **BACK,** AN' --

WAAAAGH!

I'M BACK ON THE WORLD OF TALKING HAIRLESS APES!

HEY -- YOU'RE A **DUCK!**

THERE AIN'T NO **JUSTICE!** YA SAVE THE UNIVERSE*, AN' WHAT DOES IT **GET** YA?

"YOU'RE A **DUCK!**" --THAT'S WHAT IT GETS YA!

M-MAYBE **WE** CAN HELP YOU?

IF YA **REALLY** WANNA HELP -- YOU'LL **SHUT UP** AN' POINT ME TOWARD THE NEAREST **CIGAR STORE.**

I-IT'S RIGHT AROUND THE BLOCK. C'MON. WE'LL **TAKE** YOU.

*IN FEAR #19 AND MAN-THING #1. -- LEN.

YEAH, I JUST BET YOU WILL! HOW DO I KNOW THIS AIN'T A WIZARD'S TRAP?

'CAUSE THERE AIN'T NO WIZARDS IN CLEVELAND, MAN! NOW, WALK ON!

TOBACCO

CLEVELAND! HOW COULD A PLACE POSSESS SO EERIE AND EVIL A NAME AND NOT BE RULED BY DEMONS, HOWARD WONDERS.

AND YET, SENSING THAT THESE TWO "APES" MEAN HIM NO HARM -- HE FOLLOWS.

WHAT'LL IT BE --?

BEER

THESE'LL BE FINE. HOW MUCH?

EVERYTHIN' ON THE COUNTER'S THREE FOR A BUCK.

EL ROPO

AT LEAST SOMETHING'S REASONABLE ON THIS WORLD! HERE, PAL.

SMOKE

SPECIAL

WHEELING

A BUCK EVEN. THANKS, CHUM.

HAVE A GOOD DAY -- AN' COME BACK AGA-- URRK!

HEY! HOLD IT! WHAT'RE YA TRYIN' TA ---

ONE

$1

THE UNITED STATES OF

ONE DOLLAR

--DO?

IS SOMETHING **WRONG?** IF YOU DON'T **ACCEPT** FOREIGN CURRENCY...

PANAMA RED

N-NO. IT'S OKAY. JUST LEAVE. GET OUT OF MY STORE. P-PLEASE...?

SURE--IF THAT'S WHAT YOU **WANT**, BUDDY! BUT LEMME TELL YA, THIS IS NO WAY TO BUILD **CLIENTELE!**

MY UNCLE USED TO RUN A **DRYCLEANING** STORE, AN' HIS MOTTO WAS, "**COURTESY FIRST**"!

YOU KIDS **REMEMBER** THAT.

AW, IT'S NOT MR. HOOPER'S FAULT, DUCK. **ALL** THE GROWN-UPS AROUND HERE HAVE BEEN ACTIN' KINDA **STRANGE**...

...SINCE **GARKO** MOVED INTO THE NEIGHBORHOOD.

WHAT'S A **GARKO?**

THAT'S HIM UP THERE--SEE? ON THE FOURTH FLOOR? SITTING IN THE **WINDOW?**

HE JUST **SITS** THERE ALL DAY--STARING AT THAT FUNNY **JAR.**

YEAH. AN' SOMETIMES HE SHOUTS OUT, "*I'M GONNA CONQUER THE* **WORLD!** *YOU HEAR ME?*"

EVERYBODY HOPES HE *WILL* JUMP. BUT HE JUST *SITS* THERE...

YEAH, I CAN SEE *WHY* HE MAKES PEOPLE NERVOUS. IF HE EVER *JUMPED--!*

...BRINGIN' DOWN *PROPERTY* VALUES.

OH.

Y'KNOW, JUICE, I COULD DRINK YOU RIGHT NOW AND *SHOW* ALL THOSE FOOLS. I COULD BE MASTER OF THE *WORLD!*

BUT I KEEP ASKING MYSELF: *WHY?* WHY SHOULD I CONQUER THE WORLD?

I MEAN... ONCE I *GOT* THE WORLD, WHAT WOULD I *DO* WITH IT? THE ONLY THING POWER'S *GOOD* FOR... IS GETTING *MORE* POWER.

AND IF A MAN'S *GOT* ALL THE POWER-- ALL THAT'S LEFT FOR HIM IS TO *USE* IT.

TO GET RID OF HIS *ENEMIES*, TO *KILL* PEOPLE.

SO... KILLING PEOPLE, BEING *FEARED* IS REALLY WHAT WORLD DOMINATION IS ALL *ABOUT*, RIGHT?

SO WHY WASTE ALL THAT TIME CONQUERING THE WORLD -- WHEN I CAN JUST DRINK YOU-- AND *KILL* PEOPLE?

WHY, INDEED?

BOTTOMS UP!

YA-A-ARGH!

IT'S -- *WORKING--!*

I'M -- *CHANGING--!*

I'M A *FR--ARRRGH!*

ARE THINGS *REALLY* SO DIFFERENT WHERE YOU COME FROM, MR. DUCK?

HOWARD-- CALL ME HOWARD.

NO. NOT *SO* DIFFERENT, I GUESS. MORE DUCKS -- APES DON'T TALK. THAT'S ALL.

CRASH!

THAT'S *NOT* ALL! YOUR WORLD ISN'T MENACED BY-- *GARKO!*

OKAY. SO I *SEE* IT. THAT DOESN'T MEAN I GOTTA *BELIEVE* IT!

I MEAN, I DON'T EVEN BELIEVE IN *ME*, ANYMORE!

YOU WILL BELIEVE IN ME-- OR YOU WILL *DIE!* FOR I KILL BECAUSE ALL ELSE IS *FUTILE!*

SUCH IS THE *MISSION* OF--

"GARKO, THE MAN-FROG!

SO *CHOOSE!* FEAR ME--FALL AT MY FEET -- OR *PERISH!*

HA HA HA HA HA HA HA

YEAH -- WELL -- HOW 'BOUT IF WE JUST *RUN AWAY* FROM YOU?

NEVER *THOUGHT* OF THAT, DIDJA?

Psst-- YOU KIDS CALL THE **COPS!** I'LL KEEP HIM **BUSY**...

... IF I DON'T *DIE* FIRST.

CRRAK

HA HA HA HA *HA!* YOU ARE **DOOMED**, DUCK! THERE IS NO ESCAPE FROM A LEAPING *MAN-FROG!*

NUTS! I'M ACTING LIKE A *LOON!* I CAN'T RUN FROM HIM *FOREVER!*

I GOTTA FIND SOMETHING TO *HIT* HIM WITH! *THERE--!*

THIS IS MORE *LIKE* IT! I'M *READY* FOR THAT WARTY MANIAC *NOW!*

I KNOW YOU'RE HERE, DUCK! THERE'S NO USE HIDING. COME OUT -- AND *DIE!*

ON MY WORLD, GARKO, WE NEVER SAY "DIE!" WE SAY--

--KILL!!

PERHAPS THE TIME HE HAS SPENT IN THE UN-WORLD HAS MADE HIM TOO RASH, TOO FOOLISHLY DARING--!

OR PERHAPS THE SUDDEN APPEARANCE OF THIS MONSTER HAS TAPPED A HITHERTO UNKNOWN RESERVOIR OF COURAGE WITHIN HIM--!

BUT HE FIGHTS WITH A SAVAGERY HE HAS NEVER KNOWN BEFORE!

WH-WHAT'S HAPPENING TO ME?

HE FINDS HIMSELF GROWLING WORDS OF DEFIANCE, WORDS OF ANGER!

OH MY GOD! I'M SHRINKING! BECOMING A REAL FROG!

HE IS FILLED WITH A DETERMINATION TO WIN, TO CARVE A PLACE FOR HIMSELF IN THIS STRANGE WORLD!

GETTING HARDER TO THINK! WANNA FIND A POND!

I'LL KILL YA! I'LL BREAK EVERY WART ON YOUR BODY!

ribit

INDEED, HE IS SO POSSESSED WITH THAT THOUGHT, THAT HE NEVER REALIZES THE MENACE IS ENDED.

OW-W-W! HEY! WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE--?

JOE! MIKE! IT'S HIM! THE MANIAC THE KIDS CALLED ABOUT!

HUH--?!

WHAT'RE YA DOIN'? YA GOT THE WRONG GUY, I TELL YA! IT'S A FROG YOU'RE AFTER!

A FROG. SURE, BUDDY. WE'LL TALK ABOUT IT AT THE STATION--

--AFTER WE GET YOU OUTTA THAT DUCK SUIT!

DUCK SUIT?? ARE YOU CRAZY? THIS IS MY BODY! I'M REAL, I TELL YA!

SURE, SURE. WE KNOW. WE'RE JUST TAKING YOU IN FOR YOUR PROTECTION.

WE'LL COME BACK FOR THE FROG.

waaagh

POLICE

ribi

SPLAT

THE END

BRUNNER 74

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ALL-NEW!

THREE FACES OF FEAR!

MACABRE DOUBLE-LENGTH MIND-BENDERS IN THE MYSTERIOUS MARVEL MANNER!

EK ADKINS

EXTRA!

HOWARD THE DUCK BATTLES FOR HIS LIFE AGAINST THE MOST INCREDIBLE VAMPIRE OF ALL!

From the time of his hatching, he was...different. A potentially brilliant scholar who dreaded the structured environment of school, he educated himself in the streets, taking whatever work was available, formulating his philosophy of self from what he learned of the world about him. And then the Cosmic Axis shifted...and that world *changed.* Suddenly, he was stranded in a universe he could not fathom. Without warning, he became a strange fowl in an even stranger land.

Stan Lee PRESENTS: HOWARD THE DUCK!™

HELLEO!!

IN A CLEVELAND, OHIO, JAIL CELL, A VICTIM OF BLIND JUSTICE LANGUISHES IN SOLITUDE. HE IS A HERO; HE HAS SAVED THE CITY FROM THE MONSTROUS MADNESS OF GARKO, THE MAN-FROG.

FREE the N.Y. 8 MILLION

NOT

ANOTHER EXCURSION INTO BASIC WEIRDNESS BY

STEVE GERBER WRITER | FRANK BRUNNER ARTIST

TOM PALMER, INKER

ANNETTE KAWECKI, LETTERER
GLYNIS WEIN, COLORIST

LEN WEIN, EDITOR

BUT AS A DIRECT CONSEQUENCE, HE HAS BEEN ARRESTED...FOR CREATING A DISTURBANCE.

SUDDENLY--

CLANG

:WAUK!:

I DON'T BELIEVE IT. *THIS* IS THE PRISONER WHO'S *STUMPED* OUR BEST INVESTIGATORS-- THIS *MIDGET* IN A *DUCK SUIT*?!

YESSIR, COMMISSIONER GORDONSKI. WE FIGURED *YOU'D* WANT A *LOOK* AT 'IM.

AWRIGHT, "MR. DUCK"-- *SNAP TO!* YA GOT A *VISITOR.*

OBOY.

YOU FIGURED *I'D* LIKE TO LOOK AT A *DUCK SUIT,* EH? I DON'T KNOW WHETHER TO *LAUGH*-- OR PUNCH YOU IN THE *MOUTH!*

I PRESUME YOU'VE AT LEAST GOTTEN HIS *FINGER-PRINTS...?*

W-WE *TRIED,* SIR...

TH-THEY WOULDN'T *TAKE* THROUGH THE *FEATHERS...*

...SIR?

SHUT UP! AND YOU-- WHOEVER YOU ARE-- TAKE OFF ALL YOUR CLOTHES--*NOW!*

OR WE'LL ADD OB-STRUCTION OF *JUSTICE* TO THE CHARGE AGAINST YOU.

OKAY... IF YOU *SAY* SO...

BUT I REALLY DON'T SEE HOW IT'S GONNA *HELP*... TO *EMBARRASS* ME...

SEE, IT ALL BEGAN WITH THIS *FROG,* AN'--

I SAID ALL YOUR CLOTHES!!

OKAY, *OKAY*... HERE... *TAKE* IT! BUT I'M *TELLIN'* YOU...

THAT DOES IT!

THIS HAS GONE FAR ENOUGH, COME *HERE*--THIS INSTANT!

I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU HOPED TO *GAIN* BY THIS LUNATIC CHARADE, BUT IT'S *OVER*, DO YOU HEAR?

WH-WHAT'RE YA GONNA *DO*?

QUIET--AND KEEP THOSE WINGS-- *HANDS!*--BEHIND YOUR BACK!

I'M GOING TO DO WHAT TOMPKINS HERE *SHOULD'VE* DONE!

I'M GOING TO *FRISK* YOU--

--UNTIL I FIND THE *ZIPPER*--

--ON THIS CRAZY OUTFIT OF-- GOT TO BE--

--BUT THERE'S JUST--

--*SKIN!*

LORD HELP ME... IT'S *REAL*... THERE'S NO ZIPPER... NO MIDGET... IT'S A *TALKING DUCK*...!

IT'S A *MUTANT*... SOME SORT OF HORRIBLE *FREAK*...!

OH, *BROTHER!*

GET IT *OUT* OF HERE! I DON'T CARE WHAT YOU *DO* WITH IT--JUST GET IT OUT OF MY JAIL BEFORE THE *PAPERS* HEAR--

--WE'VE BOOKED A *DUCK!*

Y-YOU *HEARD* 'IM, DUCK--

YOU'RE FREE TA GO, GOOD-*BYE!*

I *TRIED* TO TELL YOU, NO HARD FEELINGS...?

POLICE

86th

MAYBE I'M GETTIN' *LUCKY*, FINALLY. I THOUGHT SURE THEY WERE GONNA KEEP ME IN THERE 'TIL *MOULTING SEASON*.

ONLY--*NOW* WHAT? WHERE DO I *GO*? WHAT DOES A GUY *DO* TO MAKE A BUCK AN' *SURVIVE*...

... IN A WORLD WHERE HE DOESN'T *BELONG*?

SOBERING QUESTIONS INDEED--EVEN FOR THOSE OF US WITH-OUT HOWARD'S PECULIAR PROBLEM...

...EVEN FOR A MAN LIKE JUBAL BROWN, FARMER, WHO, THOUGH HE CANNOT SUSPECT IT...

...IS ABOUT TO CONFRONT HIS DESTINY.

WELL, I'LL BE!

WHERE'D *YOU* COME FROM? THAT CAPE AN' ALL, YA MUST BE SOME KINDA *SHOW COW*. A RUNAWAY, I BET.

SOMEBODY'LL BE *LOOKIN'* FOR *YOU*, SWEETHEART.

C'MON, YA KIN STAY IN *HERE* FER TH' NIGHT.

I'LL FIX UP THIS *STALL* FER YA, AN' COME MORNIN', WE'LL CALL TH'--

EEAAAGH

AND FARMER BROWN'S DESTINY IS DEATH!

RAZOR-SHARP FANGS SINK DEEP INTO THE FLESH OF HIS THROAT.

AND, A MOMENT LATER, HIS BODY IS UTTERLY DRAINED OF BLOOD!

AND THEN, HER THIRST SATED, THE COWLED COW UNDERGOES A WEIRD TRANS-FORMATION.

HER BILLOWING CAPE BECOMES LEATHERN WINGS...

...THE WINGS OF A VAMPIRE BAT!

DADDY? DADDY, WHAT'S--?

OH, NO-- NO! STAY BACK-- DON'T--

HAHAHAHAOOO

...WHERE, THE FOLLOWING EVENING...

THE STRANGE CREATURE SAILS OVER THE GIRL'S HEAD...INTO THE NIGHT...TOWARD CLEVELAND...

ND PLAIN DEALE

5TH MYSTERY FARM DEATH

THE KILLER'S NOT ONE OF THE HAIRLESS APES--IT'S A FARM ANIMAL--A CHICKEN, MAYBE.

I NEVER DID TRUST CHICKENS.

BUT THE COPS HERE WOULD NEVER THINK OF THAT.

HEY! WHAT IF I CAUGHT THE KILLER!? MAYBE I COULD GET A JOB WITH THE COPS, AN'...

NUTS! IT AIN'T NO MYSTERY TO ME!

I'LL DO IT!

HOWARD SPENDS THAT NIGHT AND THE NEXT DAY IN THE PARK, CONCEIVING A DARING PLAN...A SCHEME THAT WILL COME TO FRUITION THIS NIGHT... FOR NOW THE BOVINE BLOOD-BEAST STALKS THE CITY!

MOOOOOOOOO

AND SHE HAS COME SEEKING VENGEANCE!

VENGEANCE FOR A LIFE STOLEN AWAY FROM HER MORE THAN 300 YEARS AGO, A PEACEFUL EXISTENCE IN THE PLENTIFUL PASTURES OF SWITZERLAND...

...AS THE FAVORITE COW OF OLD HANS.

BUT LATE ONE NIGHT, WHILE HANS SLEPT, A DESPERATE STRANGER CAME TO THE LITTLE FARM.

ALL THE DOORS AND WINDOWS OF THE VILLAGE WERE LOCKED.

AND THE STRANGER WAS VERY THIRSTY.

...AND NOT FOR MILK.

HANS COULD NOT BEAR TO EAT HER BLOODLESS CORPSE. SHE HAD BEEN...TOO CLOSE TO HIS HEART FOR THAT.

BESSIE

TEARFULLY, HE COMMITTED HER BODY TO THE EARTH AND SAID A QUIET PRAYER...

...NEVER GUESSING...

...THAT THREE NIGHTS LATER...

...BESSIE WOULD RISE FROM HER GRAVE...UNDEAD!

FOR THREE CENTURIES NOW SHE HAS PURSUED THE STRANGER, ALWAYS ONE STEP BEHIND. AND TONIGHT THE SEARCH GOES ON.

TWO A.M.: CLEVELAND SLEEPS... SAVE FOR ONE LONE FIGURE.

IF THE KILLER'S AROUND, IT'LL HAVE TO GO FOR ME. THERE'S NOBODY ELSE ON THE STREETS!

COULD THIS BE THE STRANGER, SHE WONDERS? HE MIGHT HAVE CHANGED CLOTHES AFTER ALL THIS TIME.

SHE MUST INVESTIGATE.

WHOOSH

YIPES--I'M BEING DIVE-BOMBED--

AND SO SHE SWOOPS DOWN FROM THE ROOF-TOP, RIPPING ASUNDER HOWARD'S DISGUISE.

--BY A COW?!

BUT SPYING BESSIE'S FANGS, THE DUCK QUICKLY REALIZES THIS COW IS ANY-THING BUT CONTENTED.

DAUNT-LESSLY, HE LASHES OUT, SWINGING HIS WOODEN PROP AT THE HELLCOW'S HEAD. BUT...

IT DISSOLVED-- TURNED INTO MIST! IT'S GONE!

WHAP

ONLY TEMPORARILY. SHE REMATERIALIZES A MOMENT LATER BEHIND THE WIDE-EYED WATERFOWL AND, MADDENED, CHARGES!

FOR A MOMENT, THE DUCK'S WORLD IS A MAD MELANGE OF SOUND:

SPTANGL

RRRING

KRAK

THUK

OWW

THE SHATTERING OF GLASS... THE CRACKING OF WOOD... THE SHRILL RING OF THE SHOP'S BURGLAR ALARM...

AND THEN, THE HOT, WET SLURPING, THE LOW GROWL OF THE HORRIBLE HELLCOW!

CORNERED! I NEVER SAW A COW MOVE SO FAST! I'M DONE FOR--UNLESS--

WAIT! THAT LUG WRENCH!

AH-HA! GOTCHA! EVEN A COW VAMPIRE CAN'T STAND THE SIGHT OF A CROSS!

HER CRIMSON EYES FLARING WITH RAGE, THE RECREANT RUMINANT DRAWS BACK.

MOOOOO

GOT 'ER ON THE DEFENSIVE...

BUT THAT'S NOT ENOUGH. I GOTTA STOP 'ER FROM KILLING AGAIN.

I'VE GOT A STAKE-- NOW I NEED A HAMMER!

ONLY--IF I GRAB FOR IT, I HAVE TO DROP THE CROSS! AND AS SOON AS I DO THAT-- SHE'LL BE ON TOP OF ME.

THIS IS HIS MOMENT OF TRUTH. IN ONE MOTION, HE DROPS THE WRENCH, DUCKS, AND LUNGES FOR THE MALLET.

THE HELLCOW, TOO, HURLS HERSELF AT HER TARGET--BUT MISSES, HER COLD, UNMILKABLE UDDER BARELY BRUSHING HOWARD'S FEATHERY CROWN.

AND, HOOVES FLAILING OUT OF CONTROL, SHE COMES TO A LOUD, UNGRACEFUL LANDING...

RETRE SALE

CRASH

...AMID A PILE OF STEEL-BELTED RADIAL RETREADS.

DAZED, THE BOVINE BLOOD-SUCKER STRUGGLES TO EXTRICATE HERSELF FROM THE RUBBERY RINGS--AND FAILS.

SALE

SHE SIGHS. A TEAR ROLLS DOWN HER HAIRY CHEEK. FOR HER FANGS ARE IMBEDDED IN A WHITEWALL.

AND SHE KNOWS HER NUMBER IS UP.

ONLY ONE THING LEFT TO DO NOW. IT'S PRETTY AWFUL, BUT...AW, NO--SHE'S CRYING!

I CAN'T DO IT. BUT I GOTTA DO IT. I'VE GOT NO CHOICE...!

FORGIVE ME, COW.

PRESSING SHUT HIS EYES, GRITTING HIS BEAK, HOWARD DASHES GRIMLY FORWARD.

AND WITH A SINGLE, SICKENING "THWUNT", HE SENDS THE HELLCOW TO HER FINAL REST.

BUT NO SOONER HAS THE DEED BEEN DONE, THAN...

HOOOOO

RAY'S AUTO SHOP

FREEZE, MISTER! PUT A LIGHT ON 'IM, TOMPKINS!

HUH...?

TOMPKINS! LOOK-- IT'S ME--HOWARD! I DID IT! I GOT THE FARM KILLER!

SPARK PLUGS

TOMPKINS...?

AE

TOMPKINS-- WAIT! WHERE ARE YA GOIN'? DON'T LEAVE!

STOP! COME BACK! THIS COW WAS THE--

TOMPKINS?

DON'T...

WAAAAAAAAUGH

OF ALL THE MISERABLE, UNGRATEFUL, CORRUPT, GRAFT-RIDDEN--!

DROP DEAD, TOMPKINS-- SEE IF I CARE!!

BUT OUT ON THE STREET, HE WATCHES WITH A TWINGE OF SADNESS AS THE SQUAD CAR PULLS AWAY. IT WOULD'VE BEEN...NICE.

STEADY WORK... A ROOF OVER HIS HEAD... A RESPECTABLE POSITION IN SOCIETY...!

NOPE, THERE'S NO GETTING AWAY FROM IT.

IT'D SURE BEAT FACING AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE...

...IN A DARK AND THREATENING WORLD...

...ALL ALONE.

END

HOWARD THE DUCK

MARVEL COMICS GROUP™

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

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TRAPPED IN A WORLD HE NEVER MADE!

HOWARD THE DUCK™

BECAUSE YOU DEMANDED IT-- THE FABULOUS FIRST ISSUE OF MARVEL'S MOST SENSATIONAL NEW SUPER-STAR!

BRUNNER

AGAINST SWORD AND SORCERY, HOWARD STANDS SIDE-BY-SIDE WITH THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN!

Stan Lee PRESENTS: HOWARD THE DUCK!™

CREATED & WRITTEN BY STEVE GERBER • ILLUSTRATED & COLORED BY FRANK BRUNNER
CO-PLOTTERS
INKED BY STEVE LEIALOHA
JOHN COSTANZA, letterer
MARV WOLFMAN, editor

BEHOLD: A DEPRESSED DUCK.

TWICE HE HAS SAVED THE CITY OF CLEVELAND--FIRST FROM THE WARTY MENACE OF THE MAN-FROG, THEN FROM THE FANGS OF THE HORRIBLE HELLCOW.

AND WHAT THANKS DID HE GET? JAIL THE FIRST TIME. BENIGN NEGLECT, THE SECOND.

NOW HOMELESS, PENNILESS, HE STANDS ON THE BANK OF THE CUYAHOGA RIVER, CONTEMPLATING...

--SUICIDE? YEAH. WELL. MAYBE.

HOWARD THE BARBARIAN

ON THE OTHER HAND, MAYBE SOMETHING LESS *DRASTIC*.

A LITTLE *DIP* TO CHEER ME UP, GIMME A CHANCE TO *THINK*.

THERE'S *ALWAYS* A WAY OUT, *I* SAY. THINGS ARE *NEVER* AS BLACK AS THEY--

--SLIME.

:*WAAUUGH*:

THAT DOES IT! I CAN'T *STAND IT* ANYMORE!! THIS WHOLE *WORLD* IS FOULED UP!!!

NAH... THAT'S WHAT'S *WRONG* WITH IT. IT'S RUN BY HAIRLESS APES *INSTEAD* OF FOWL.

WHAT AM I *DOING* HERE??

NOTHIN' *PRODUCTIVE*, THAT'S FOR SURE! SO WHY BOTHER STICKING AROUND? A MASOCHIST I *AIN'T*.

ONE LITTLE LEAP OFF THAT NUTTY *TOWER* AN' THIS LIFE OF GRIEF COULD BE *OVER*.

SURE. I'LL GO WITH A *FLOURISH*. THE BIG SPLASH. THE LAST HURRAH, WHY NOT?

I MEAN... IT'S NOT LIKE ANYONE'LL *NOTICE*.

SHORTLY, ACROSS THE WATERS...

FIGURES. THE JERK WHO *DESIGNED* THIS ARCHITECTURAL ABORTION FORGOT TO PUT IN A *DOOR*!

IT'S, AH, *TALLER* THAN I THOUGHT, TOO... BUT THERE'S NO TURNING BACK *NOW*.

LIKE THEY SAY, THE DIE IS *CAST*...

...AN' I'M *IT.* OR SOMETHING LIKE TH--

HEY, *THIS'S* WEIRD. THE WALL'S MADE OUTTA *PLASTIC*-- OLD *CREDIT CARDS!*

WHAT *IS* THIS PLACE?! WHY--?

AMERICAN EXPRESS

ON SECOND THOUGHT --WHO *CARES?*

I CAME TO *KILL MYSELF,* NOT PLAY BUILDING INSPECTOR.

SO IF THERE'S NO DOORS-- I GUESS I START *CLIMBING.*

*THE ASCENT IS SLOW, **ARDUOUS.** HOWARD'S WEBBED FEET PROVIDE NO **TRACTION** AGAINST THE SMOOTH SYNTHETIC SURFACE. MORE THAN ONCE HE **SLIPS**... AND NEARLY RUSHES HIS DATE WITH DESTINY. BUT THE DUCK **PERSEVERES,** AND...*

A WINDOW. IT'S ABOUT *TIME!*

I'M *ENTITLED* TO A BREATHER BEFORE I DIE.

SHOULD'A KNOWN EVEN *SUICIDE* COULDN'T BE *SIMPLE* ON THIS WORL--

HUH--?!

HELP!

SPINNING ON HIS TAIL FEATHERS, HOWARD PEERS IN THE WINDOW TO SEE:

Y-YOU'RE A *DUCK!*

YEAH. I KNOW. YOU HAIRLESS APES KEEP *REMINDING* ME.

WHAT'S WITH THE *CHAINS,* SWEETHEART?

I'M THE *PRISONER* OF A *MADMAN!* YOU MUST *SAVE* ME... PLEASE... I BEG YOU...!

I REALIZE THIS IS *STRANGE,* FOLKS ...BUT WHAT THE HECK?... IT BEATS DOING MYSELF IN. READY OR NOT, LADY, *HERE I--*

--COME!

OH NO.

THE CEREMONIAL *AXE!* SEIZE IT! *DEFEND* YOURSELF!

"SEIZE IT," SHE SAYS! IT WEIGHS :UHH: A *TON!*

AND IT'S *STUCK* IN THIS STUPID *STUMP!*

BESIDES... I CAN'T JUST SLICE OPEN A *DUMB ANIMAL!* WHAT'LL I DO IF I *GET* IT LOO--

:OOOPS:

THE FOWL IS FLUNG WILDLY ACROSS THE ROOM, *AWAY* FROM THE SPUMING BEAST, CARRIED BY THE WEIGHT OF THE BROBDINGNAGIAN *BLADE...*

THUD

...UNTIL HE STRIKES THE CHAMBER'S FAR WALL... AND A CERTAIN *ROPE...*

...BRINGING DOWN *SALVATION* FROM *ABOVE...*

...IN A VIOLENT, WHOLLY *UNEXPECTED* FASHION.

HOLY CROW! IT CRUSHED HIM! TALK ABOUT A DOG'S *LUCK--!*

POOR GUY. BUT AT LEAST HE DIDN'T *SUFFER.*

STILL, I'D'VE RATHER TAMED HIM WITH A *DOG YUMMIE* THAN--

UH-OH! HE'S STARTIN' TO *GLOW!*

AW, FER CRYIN' OUT LOUD, HE'S *CHANGIN'!*

"INTO-- ONE OF *THEM!!"*

TERRIFIC! JUST *SWELL!* NOW I'M A *MURDERER!* I COME HERE TO WIPE *ME* OUT, AND INSTEAD--

YOU'LL HAVE *AMPLE* OPPORTUNITY TO MEET YOUR *DOOM.* I SHALL *SEE* TO *THAT.*

HAVE NO *FEAR,* FEATHERED INTERLOPER.

WE-E-AUUGH!

THUS, HOWARD LIES UNCONSCIOUS AS NIGHT PASSES INTO MORNING, AS, SOME 500 MILES AWAY...

PARKER! DON'T MOVE!

...IN THE OFFICES OF THE NEW YORK DAILY BUGLE, ACE SHUTTERBUG PETER PARKER IS ACCOSTED BY PUBLISHER J. JONAH JAMESON.

YOU'RE TOO LATE, J.J.J.-- I ALREADY CASHED MY CHECK.

VER-RY FUNNY, PARKER. YOU'RE A LOAD OF LAUGHS.

SO MAYBE YOU'D LIKE TO JUST LAUGH OFF THIS PLANE TICKET TO THE ASSIGNMENT OF THE CENTURY, TOO!

OBOY. J.J.J.'S SENT ME TO FLORIDA...CANADA ...EUROPE. THIS I DON'T WANNA BLOW!

I KNOW IT SOUNDS NUTTY, BUT THERE'RE WILD RUMORS FLYING AROUND WHERE YOU'RE HEADED...

...RUMORS ABOUT SOME STRANGE NEW MUTANT MENACE! I WANT PICTURES OF IT, PARKER!

GOOD ENOUGH.. WHERE AM I OFF TO?

CLEVE-LAND! AND WHAT YOU'RE AFTER IS... A DUCK THAT TALKS LIKE A MAN!

OKAY, NOW YOU CAN MOVE! AND DON'T COME BACK WITHOUT PHOTOS.

CLEVELAND. A DUCK. I'M GONNA BE SICK...!

NEVERTHELESS, THE YOUNG PHOTOGRAPHER (WHO IS ALSO THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN) WILL MAKE THE TRIP, ARRIVING AT HOPKINS INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AROUND NOON...

...JUST AS THE FELLED FOWL RETURNS TO THE REAL WORLD.

MR. DUCK...?

MR. DUCK, ARE YOU AWAKE YET?

AUH...? OH... YEAH... ONLY... CAN'T SEEM TA FIND MY HEAD...!

WAAAGGH!

MY CLOTHES! WHERE ARE MY CLOTHES?!

WHERE AM I?!?

WE'RE IN THIS TOGETHER NOW, DUCKY.

WE'RE BOTH PRISONERS OF PRO-RATA, THE MAD FINANCIAL WIZARD.

YEAH -- BUT HOW'D I GET THIS SWORD? WHO DRESSED ME THIS WAY?

THE SWORD, YOU'LL NEED. AND I... WELL, I CHANGED YOUR CLOTHING... ON PRO-RATA'S ORDERS.

HOW TOUCHING. SHE'S EMBARRASSED.

... AND SEE WHY THAT SHOULD BE THE LEAST OF YOUR CONCERNS.

GAZE UPON THE OFFICE OF PRO-RATA, SOON TO BE CHIEF ACCOUNTANT OF THE UNIVERSE!

FOLLOW ME, WOMAN AND WATERFOWL...

:ULP:

AND NOTE ESPECIALLY MY PRIZE OF PRIZES-- THE COSMIC CALCULATOR.

FOR YOUR FATES ARE INTIMATELY TIED TO ITS MISSING JEWELED KEY.

BY WHATEVER MEANS NECESSARY, I MUST PROCURE THAT KEY BY MIDNIGHT.

FOR AT THAT HOUR, THE STELLAR BALANCE SHEET COMES INTO ALIGNMENT... THE ASTRAL AUDIT MAY BE TAKEN... AND I--

I ALONE SHALL COLLECT THE COSMIC DIVIDEND!

YOU SHALL OBTAIN THE KEY FOR ME--THERE, THRU THE DIMENSIONAL PORTAL--AS MY HIRED BARBARIAN WOULD HAVE--

--HAD YOU NOT BROKEN EVERY BONE IN HIS BODY!

OH, SO THAT'S IT!

LOOK, THAT WAS AN ACCIDENT, AND I REALLY DON'T THINK IT'S FAIR TO BLAME ME--

IN, YOU FOOL!

:WAAUK:

THUS, WOMAN AND DUCK HURTLE BETWEEN UNIVERSES, PRO-RATA'S RASPING VOICE THEIR ONLY LINK WITH REALITY-- AND A TENUOUS LINK AT THAT: "MY ANCESTORS WERE EGYPTAIN SORCERERS, SLAVIC WITCHES, DRUIDS... AND THEY WERE FAILURES, MYSTICAL SLOBS, THE LOT OF THEM!

"ALL BECAUSE THEY FAILED TO SEE WORLD DOMINATION IN TERMS OF ACCOUNTANCY. THE UNIVERSE IS THE ULTIMATE FLOW CHART.

"AND HE WHO CAN JUGGLE THE BOOKS CAN RULE INFIN-ITY!"

WE LANDED IN SOME KINDA NEST-- REMINDS ME OF WHERE I WAS FIRST HATCHED.

HEY-- YOU OKAY?

UH-HUH... JUST SHOOK UP.

LOOK--THAT'S THE *CITADEL OF SAI-FUUR*, JUST AS PRO-RATA DESCRIBED IT TO ME. THE JEWEL-KEY'S IN *THERE*.

C'MON... LET'S *GET* IT AND *SPLIT* THIS SCENE.

WHY DON'T WE *NOT* GET IT AND SPLIT *ANYWAY*?

BY THE RED COLUMN!

'CAUSE PRO-RATA'S *WATCHING* US, DUCKY!

A DAMSEL-- PURSUED BY A NEWLY-HATCHED *BAHNDBIRD*!

MUST *SLAY* IT-- BEFORE IT *MATURES*!

EYES CLOSED AND A PRAYER ON HIS BEAK...

AND THE WARRIOR, HIS LANCE SHATTERED...

WHY AM I *SURE* HE'S TALKING ABOUT *ME*?

CRACK!

...HOWARD STRIKES!!

...PITCHES HEADLONG OFF HIS STRANGE STEED ONTO THE HARD GROUND...

...AND INTO UNCONSCIOUSNESS.

HIT HIS HEAD ON A ROCK, I GUESS. TOUGH BREAK... FOR HIM.

Y'KNOW, BABE, I LIKE YOUR ATTITUDE. WE COULD GET TO BE FRIENDS.

BUT IT GOT US FREE TRANSPORTATION.

YEAH. I COULD USE ONE OF THOSE.

QUESTION: WHY D'YA FIGURE HE SAID KILL ME BEFORE I "MATURE"? I AM MATURE.

I'VE SPENT MOST 'A MY LIFE TELLING EVERYBODY I'M MATURE.

NOW I'M EVEN GETTING THE "WHY-DON'T-YOU-GROW-UP" ROUTINE FROM BARBARIANS I'VE NEVER MET!

MMM. IT'S A HASSLE. I'VE HAD THE SAME PROBLEM...

AT THE CITADEL'S ZERO-SHAPED ENTRANCE, HOWARD AND FRIEND DISMOUNT... AND STARE WITH AWE AND TREPIDATION AT ITS TWO STONE-SILENT GUARDIANS.

THEY LOOK AS THOUGH THEY'RE ONLY SLEEPING, DON'T THEY?

YEAH... WELL... WALK ON TIPTOE. LET'S NOT WAKE 'EM UP, HUH?

FUNNY... NO REAL GUARDS FOR THIS PLACE.

YEAH. I EXPECTED AN *OBSTACLE COURSE* AT THE VERY *LEAST.*

BUT THERE'S THE JEWEL-KEY--RIGHT UP *AHEAD.* FAR OUT!

IF WE CAN'T GET THE KEY, PRO-RATA WILL *ABANDON* US HERE! WE'RE *DOOMED!*

I DIDN'T SAY *THAT.*

DON'T LET YOUR HEART LEAP WITH ANTICIPATION *YET,* KIDDO.

OOOH...!

THERE'S A GOOD *REASON* WE COULD JUST WALTZ IN HERE.

CATCH WHAT HAPPENED TO THE *LAST* GUY WHO TRIED TO GET THAT KEY.

I JUST GOTTA *THINK,* THAT'S ALL.

NUTS! WISH I HAD A *CIGAR* TA CHOMP ON. CAN'T CONCENTRATE...

OH, *I* CAN HELP YOU WITH *THAT.* LOOK IN YOUR *SCABBARD,* DUCKY.

MY LAST CIGAR!!

I FOUND IT IN YOUR BREAST POCKET... WITH YOUR *MATCHES.*

I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT *WANT* IT... FOR A MOMENT LIKE THIS. SO I RISKED PRO-RATA'S *ANGER,* AND...!

SAY NO MORE, KID. YOU'RE ONE OF THE *GOOD PEOPLE* IN MY BOOK.

NOW JUST LET ME *COGITATE* A SECOND OR TWO...

I GOT IT! HERE--TAKE MY HELMET, AND HOLD IT OUT UNDER THE GEM KEY...

AND KEEP A STEADY HAND-- WHILE I TAKE *AIM!*

SSST

WITH EAGLE-EYED PRECISION, HOWARD FLICKS THE STOGIE INTO *FLIGHT...*

CLUNK

...FREEING THE GEM-KEY!

THUS IS THE VICTORY **WON**... BUT AT A **PRICE**.

DON'T GET **MISTY-EYED**. THERE'LL BE **OTHER** CIGARS...

...WHEN WE'RE HOME **SAFE**. WE'VE GOTTA GET BACK TO THE **NEST**, SO PRO-RATA CAN OPEN THE RETURN PORTAL FOR US.

AND WE'VE GOTTA **HURRY**. SOMETHING'S GONNA **HAPPEN**. I CAN FEEL IT IN MY **BONES**.

KRE-E-ECK

PERCEPTIVE **SKELETON** YOU'VE GOT THERE, TOOTS!

GET YOUR GIRDLE IN **GEAR**, KID. THEY'RE BIG--BUT **SLOW**.

MAYBE WE CAN **OUT-RUN** 'EM--!

WHEN WE PULLED OFF THIS LITTLE HEIST--

WE SET OFF THE BURGLAR ALARM!!

OH, NO! **NO**!!

"YE GODZ," HOWARD CRIES. "THE NEST--THE SLUR ON MY MATURITY--IT ALL MAKES **SENSE** NOW--

"--MORE OR LESS."

"IT'S JUST ATTACKING ANYTHING THAT **MOVES.** MAYBE IT'LL TAKE OUT THE **GRANITE TWINS** FOR US," THE GIRL WHISPERS.

"SCORE ANOTHER POINT FOR YOUR **BONES,** SIS," THE DUCK RESPONDS.

QUICK--BEHIND THIS **ROCK!** IT HASN'T SEEN US YET!

'COURSE, IF IT'S **HUNGRY**... IT'S GONNA DOPE OUT PRETTY FAST THAT THOSE GUYS AIN'T **EDIBLE.**

LISTEN... I KNOW IT SOUNDS SILLY... BUT IF WE'RE GOING TO **DIE** TOGETHER...

...I'D LIKE TO KNOW YOUR **NAME.**

YOU'RE RIGHT! IT'S TURNING--COMING AFTER **US!**

MINE'S **BEVERLY**--BEVERLY SWITZLER. I--

WAIT! WHAT'S HAPPENING TO US?! WE'RE **FADING AWAY--!!**

HUH? OH--IT'S **HOWARD.**

AND AT THAT INSTANT, BACK IN CLEVELAND...

ADMIT IT, PARKER--YOU'VE BEEN HAD! JAMESON WINS THIS ONE.

YOU'D THINK, AFTER YEARS OF SUPERHEROING, I'D DEVELOP A HEALTHY SKEPTICISM.

BUT NO, J.J.J. SENDS ME TO THE ARMPIT OF THE NATION TO SNAP PIX OF A TALKING DUCK-- AND I FALL FOR IT!

BUT, BARELY A MILE AWAY...

UH... I THINK YA RANG UP MORE THAN YOU BARGAINED FOR, WIZ.

THE BAHND-BIRD! MUST'VE HIT THE WRONG DECIMAL!

"STAND ASIDE," PRO-RATA CRIES, "I MUST RECALCULATE-- SEND THE MONSTER BACK TO TO ITS NEST BEFORE--"

KRAAK

--IT FLAPS ITS WINGS.

THE KEY! GIVE ME THE KEY!!

IT'S OUR ONLY HOPE OF CONTROLLING THE BIRD!

OKAY... SO I MAY NOT RECOGNIZE A *JOKE* WHEN IT HITS ME IN THE FACE.

BUT MY *SPIDER-SENSE* NEVER LIES ABOUT *TROUBLE*. THAT WAS AN *EXPLOSION* I HEARD.

AND THE DAY'S BEEN JUST *DULL* ENOUGH TO JUSTIFY HITCHING A RIDE TO CHECK IT OUT.

I'LL BROOK NO *DAWDLING*, DUCK! HAND OVER THE KEY-- AND YOU AND THE WOMAN ARE FREE TO *GO*!

WHILE *YOU* SET YOURSELF UP AS A *GOD*, RIGHT?

MASTER CHARGE

STOP! WHAT MADNESS IS--?

YOU FOOL *FOWL*! YOU'VE THROWN AWAY OUR *LIVES*!

WHEN THIS MONSTROSITY ADAPTS TO ITS NEW REALITY--*WE SHALL BE ITS PREY*!

RIGHT, YOU'RE JUST LOOKING OUT FOR MY WELFARE. *SURE*.

'SCUSE THE *INTRUSION*, BUT DID ANYBODY *LOSE* THIS?

SORRY, MAC-- *NO DICE*! IF YOUR COSMIC CALCULATOR CAN REALLY *DO* THAT--

--IT'S TOO POWERFUL FOR *ANYBODY* TO POSSESS!

BANK AMERICARD

MASTER CHARGE

I WAS JUST SWINGING *BY* AND--

HEY! WHAT'S GOING *ON* HERE?!

SPIDER-MAN!! I'VE NO NOTION WHAT YOU'RE DOING HERE--

--BUT I SHAN'T WASTE AMENITIES ON THE LIKES OF YOU! GIVE ME THAT KEY--

--OR DIE!!

HE MEANS IT! HE'S GONNA KILL THE GUY! UNLESS--!

THUK

AAARGH

HIS AIM SPOILED BY THE JARRING IMPACT OF THE SCABBARD--

--PRO-RATA'S MYSTICAL BOLT SAILS OVER THE WEB-SLINGER'S HEAD--

--INTO THE MURKISH CUYAHOGA, IGNITING THE VOLATILE POLLUTANTS THEREIN!

I'LL WORRY LATER OVER WHETHER I BELIEVE THIS.

FOR NOW, I'LL JUST MAKE SURE NONE OF US BECOMES DINNER FOR POLLY PARROT HERE!

THEN MAYBE I CAN HELP OUT THE LITTLE GUY WHO SAVED MY LIFE!

--BUT THERE WOULD BE NO BUDGETARY *LOGIC* IN THAT! NO WAY TO JUSTIFY THE *EXPENDITURE* OF MAGIC!

BUT SPIDER-MAN'S DEATH WILL NET ME THE *GEM-KEY!* I'LL *PROFIT* BY DESTROYING *HIM!*

BAH! I COULD REDUCE YOU TO *DRUMSTICKS* WITH A SINGLE *SPELL*, DUCK--

HE'S GONNA TRY *AGAIN!* AND THIS TIME I'VE GOT NOTHING TO *THROW*--

--EXCEPT *MYSELF!!*

*YAAA

HANDS GIFTED WITH THE PROPORTIONATE STRENGTH OF A SPIDER HAUL THE HARRIED HOWARD TO SAFETY.

AND SO COMES TO PASS PERHAPS THE WEIRDEST MOMENT IN THIS, THE MARVEL AGE OF COMICS, AS...

WEB-FOOT MEETS WEB-HEAD!!

YOU'RE FOR REAL! JAMESON DIDN'T CRACK HIS NUT! YOU'RE A TALKING DUCK!!

YOU'RE NOT EXACTLY MR. NORMAL, EITHER, Y'KNOW.

AND WHILE YOU WERE SPOUTIN' OFF, TELLIN' ME WHAT I ALREADY KNOW--

--PRO-RATA'S PARAKEET FLEW THE COOP!

LOOK--YOU KEEP THE JEWEL-KEY. I'LL SEE ABOUT TRACKING DOWN BIG BIRD.

GOTTA GO NOW. HERE COMES MY CONVENIENT HELICOPTER.

YEAH, SEE YA. BE SURE AN' WRITE.

WELL, HOWARD... THE DANGER'S PAST. AND WE'RE BOTH ALIVE AND WELL.

WHAT WILL YOU DO NOW? WHERE WILL YOU GO?

I DUNNO... BUT I SURE COULD USE A GOOD CIGAR.

NEXT: THE STAR-SPAWNED THREAT OF THE DEADLY SPACE TURNIP! BE HERE!

HOWARD THE DUCK

MARVEL COMICS GROUP™

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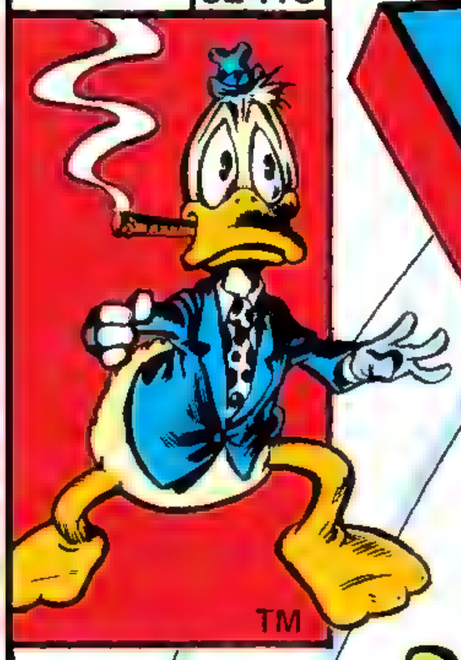
TRAPPED IN A WORLD HE NEVER MADE!

HOWARD THE DUCK™



NOTHING CAN SAVE YOU *NOW*, DUCK--YOU'RE AT THE MERCY OF--

--THE DEADLY SPACE TURNIP!

BRUNNER

Stan Lee PRESENTS: HOWARD THE DUCK!™

WRITTEN BY **STEVE GERBER** ILLUSTRATIONS BY **FRANK BRUNNER** INKING BY **STEVE LEIALOHA**
TOM ORZECHOWSKI, *LETTERING* MICHELE WOLFMAN, *COLORS* **MARV WOLFMAN,** *EDITOR*

CRY TURNIP!

IT HAD BEEN THIS WAY SINCE THE **HOLOCAUST.** TO SURVIVE, ONE HAD TO FIGHT EVERY DAY OF ONE'S LIFE. BLOOD HAD BECOME AS FAMILIAR A SIGHT TO ME AS THE UNDER-SIDE OF BEVERLY'S **KNEE.**

BLOOD: THICK, HOT, RED, FLOWING IN RIVERS ACROSS THE ONCE-GREEN LAND-SCAPE NOW QUICK-FRIED BROWN BY THE **POSITRON** CANNONS OF THE DREADED **MUURKS.**

THE **MUURKS:** NO ONE KNEW WHERE THEY'D COME FROM, NOR EVEN **WHEN** THEY'D ARRIVED, EXACTLY. BUT THEY'D QUICKLY WORN OUT THEIR **WELCOME.** IT'S HARD TO BE **HOSPITABLE** TO AN ALIEN RACE THAT WANTS **YOUR** PLANET FOR THEIR **OWN.**

IT'S NO USE, BEVERLY-- THEY'RE ***EVERYWHERE!*** WE'LL HAVE TO ATTEMPT AN ***ESCAPE!***

ESCAPE: HOW IMPOSSIBLE IT SEEMED WITH THE MUURKS CLOSING IN NOW FROM EVERY SIDE.

BESIDES, I WASN'T SURE I **WANTED** TO ESCAPE.

WHATEVER **ELSE** I MAY HAVE BEEN-- DISMAYED, PANIC-STRICKEN, TERRIFIED -- I WAS STILL **KILLMALLARD** THE WARRIOR.

AND I HAD A **REP** TO LIVE UP TO!

I WHIRLED -- FIRED IN A PATTERN -- **SLICING** SEVERAL OF THOSE SAVAGE, LEERING BEASTS **NOT-SO-CLEANLY** IN **TWAIN!**

I RECALLED THE **HISTORY** TEXTS, A PARAGRAPH ABOUT A SUB-GENRE OF LITERATURE KNOWN AS **SPACE-OPERA** THAT DEALT WITH TOPICS JUST SUCH AS THIS.

A GRIM SMILE. WHERE WAS THE "OPERA" IN **MY** STRUGGLE?

NO, THERE WERE NO SONGS **THIS** NIGHT. AND THE ONLY ORCHESTRATION WAS THE DIN OF **DESTRUCTION** ALL ABOUT US...

WHO WAS SINGING THE **ARIAS**? WHO WROTE THE **LIBRETTO** -- THE AGONIZED DEATH-SQUEALS OF SEVERED MUURKS?

... A RAUCOUS SYMPHONY OF SHATTERING ROCK AND CRACKLING, BURNING MUURKFLESH.

AND ONE OTHER SOUND:

BEVERLY AND I RECOG-NIZED IT INSTANTLY.

CLUNCH CLUNCH

A MUURKIAN **SEPTOPOD**-- ONE OF THE SEVEN-LEGGED MECHANICAL MONSTROSI-TIES THE SCALY DEVILS HAD EMPLOYED IN THEIR SUCCESSFUL CAMPAIGN TO **WALK ALL OVER US!**

CONSTRUCTED OF THE ALIEN METAL **MUURKONIUM**, THEY WERE **IMPERVIOUS** TO OUR HIGHEST-INTENSITY PLASMA-BURSTS.

BEVERLY AND I WERE, IN A WORD, **DOOMED** TO THE MOST HORRIFYING AND BRUTAL DEMISE KNOWN ON THIS WORLD SINCE THE DAY WHEN **CORPORATE** MONSTERS ROSE ENCASED IN GLASS AND STEEL AND SWALLOWED OUR ANCESTORS WHOLE INTO THEIR BUREAUCRATIC DIGESTIVE TRACTS, REDUCING THEIR MINDS TO GELATIN AND THEIR BONES TO ROUGHAGE, MAKING WASTE-MATTER OF **PEOPLE**, THEN CALLOUSLY **ELIMINATING** THEM AT AGE SIXTY-FIVE, SIXTY-TWO FOR WOMEN.

NO HOPE. OUR RAY-FIRE SERVED ONLY TO **HEAT** THE ALLOY FOOT SO THAT WE WOULD NOT ONLY BE **CRUSHED**...

... BUT **COOKED** AS WELL.

≡WAAAUGH≡

HOWARD...?

WAAAUGH

WE'RE DEAD -- *DEAD!* MURDERED BY THE MUURKS!

HOWARD, NO-- WE'RE *FINE!*

WE'RE HERE-- IN *CLEVELAND*-- IN *MY* HOUSE!

NO! NO! NO!!

YES, YES, *YES!* OPEN YOUR *EYES!* LOOK AROUND! SEE FOR *YOURSELF!*

HUH... oh... WHA' HAPPENED?

YOU HAD A *NIGHTMARE,* THAT'S ALL. YOU WERE READING ARTHUR'S *STORY* WHEN YOU FELL ASLEEP.

THERE AREN'T ANY MUURKS?

NO MUURKS.

BUT I'VE GOT *COFFEE* AND BALONEY SAND-WICHES READY, IF YOU'RE INTERESTED.

YEAH... *YEAH,* THAT SOUNDS GOOD. I'M *STARVED.*

YOU WOULDN'T BY ANY CHANCE... HAVE A *CIGAR* AROUND, TOO, WOULDJA?

SURPRISE. I KEEP 'EM AROUND FOR ARTHUR. I DON'T THINK HE'D MIND...!

... IF YOU PROMISE NOT TO GIMME ANY MORE OF THOSE *STORIES* TO READ... AT LEAST, NOT AT *BEDTIME.*

YOUR BOYFRIEND'S GOT A *WEIRD* IMAGINATION.

TOOTS, I THINK YOU 'N' ME ARE GONNA GET *ALONG...*

OH, ARTHUR'S NOT MY *BOYFRIEND,* EXACTLY. I'M SORT OF A *SISTER* TO HIM.

THAT'S... ENCOURAGING.

*PRO-RATA: THE MAD WIZARD WHO CAPTURED BOTH HOWARD AND BEV LAST ISSUE. --MARV.

HE HAD ME CHAINED UP THERE FOR A MONTH-- EVER SINCE I ANSWERED HIS AD FOR AN ARTIST'S MODEL AND FELL INTO HIS CLUTCHES.

BY NOW, HE PROBABLY THINKS I'VE SKIPPED TOWN.

I WASN'T ALLOWED TO MAKE PHONE CALLS FROM PRO-RATA'S TOWER.*

WE'D PROBABLY STILL BE THERE IF SPIDER-MAN HADN'T TOLD THAT 'COPTER PILOT TO COME BACK FOR US. =haha=

BLESS OUR PAD

WHAT'S SO FUNNY?

"THE LOOK ON THE PILOT'S FACE WHEN HE SAW YOU... AND YOU SPOKE TO HIM.

"THAT FLIGHT WAS MORE DANGEROUS THAN PRO-RATA AND ALL HIS MONSTERS PUT TOGETHER!"

LEMME SAY IT FOR YOU, HUH: "Y-YOU'RE A DUCK!"

B-BUT... AREN'T YOU?

HEY, YA JERK! KEEP YER EYES ON THE ROAD--

--AN' OFF MY FEATHERS, HUH?

B-BUT...!

ANYWAY, THAT'S ALL OVER WITH. AN' I'M BACK WHERE I STARTED-- NO JOB, NO HOME, NO BREAD--!

BUT YOU HAVE A FRIEND NOW-- ME. AND TOMORROW, YOU'LL HAVE ANOTHER.

WHO-- ARTHUR?

DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE JEALOUS-- JUST BECAUSE HE NAMES HIS HEROINES AFTER ME?

NAH!

WHAT IS IT, THEN -- THE *HERO'S* NAME? DON'T YOU LIKE "*KILLMALLARD*"?

Aaah... I GUESS IT'S JUST TOO EASY FOR ME TO *IDENTIFY* WITH.

WELL, *I* THINK IT HAS A *NOBLE* SOUND ABOUT IT. A RING OF *STRENGTH* AND SAVAGERY--!

YEAH. REAL COMMERCIAL POTENTIAL. HOT *STUFF*. HEAVY.

I'M NO *CRITIC* -- BUT PERSONALLY I THINK HE *TRIES* TOO HARD--HITS YA OVER THE HEAD WITH THE *MESSAGE*.

SO HE'S GOT A *SOCIAL CONSCIENCE*. YOU COULD USE A LITTLE OF THAT *YOURSELF*.

LISTEN, HONEY-- IF *ANYBODY* IN THIS WORLD KNOWS WHAT IT IS TO BE *OPPRESSED*--!

I'M A MINORITY OF *ONE* IN THIS SCREWY PLACE! EVERY INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURE YOU *GOT* IS LOADED AGAINST ME!

THAT'S IT-- PROVE ME *RIGHT*!

YOU'RE ONLY CONCERNED ABOUT *YOU!* AND I'LL BET YOU WERE THAT WAY ON *YOUR* WORLD, TOO!

ARTHUR'S AN *ARTIST!* A *SERIOUS* ARTIST! HE'S WORKING AS A *RENT-A-COP* TO SUPPORT HIMSELF UNTIL HIS *WRITING* TAKES OFF.

Oh-- *UNPUB-LISHED*, HUH? ONE O' *THOSE*?

WHAT'S *THAT* SUPPOSED TO MEAN?

NOTHIN', NOTHIN' AT ALL...

G'NIGHT, TOOTS.

GOOD NIGHT, ARTH-- *HOWARD*.

AS THE FOWL AND HIS LISSOME FRIEND DRIFT INTO **SLUMBER**...

UNIVERSAL IMPO

...THEIR TOPIC OF CONVERSATION, ONE **ARTHUR WINSLOW**, FIGHTS TO STAY **AWAKE.**

HONK FOR DARD

≥yawn≤ OH, GAWD-- THREE HOURS TO **GO.**

THIS HAS GOT TO BE THE MOST **BORING** JOB I--

CRASH

HOLY CRUD! WHAT--?

FOR SEVEN MONTHS OF EVENTLESS NIGHTS HE'S **WAITED** FOR THIS MOMENT...

...PRAYED FOR THE SCENT OF **DANGER!**

AND NOW IT'S **COME**: A CHANCE TO STAND IN THE PRESENCE OF THE **UNKNOWN**...

...AND TO FACE IT **UNAFRAID**, AS DO HIS FICTIONAL ALTER EGOS!

BUT-- **NOTHING.** NO MOVEMENT WITHIN, SAVE FOR THAT OF THE **RATS.**

NO SIGN OF MENACE. NO CREEPING THREAT. ONLY... A **VEGETABLE.**

BUT IT'S A **BIG** VEGETABLE. AND IT **GLOWS.** AND IT'S THE CLOSEST THING TO **EXCITEMENT** THIS JOB HAS OFFERED **YET.**

SO HE DECIDES TO **INVESTIGATE.**

CHANCES ARE IT ISN'T REALLY DANGEROUS.

IT'S ONLY A TURNIP, AFTER ALL -- EVEN IF IT IS THE SIZE OF A BASKETBALL.

AND WHAT EARTHLY HARM COULD A TURNIP DO TO ANYONE?

ANSWER: NO EARTHLY HARM. BUT THEN, THIS ISN'T AN EARTHLY TURNIP.

THIS TURNIP CAME FROM OUTER SPACE-- AND IT WAS THE SIZE OF A HOUSE BEFORE AIR-FRICTION WHITTLED IT DOWN...

... BEFORE IT CAME HURTLING DOWN FROM THE SKY AND THROUGH THE WAREHOUSE WINDOW...

... BEFORE ITS POWERFUL, BUT DYING, INTELLIGENCE FORCE CAPTURED THE MIND AND SOUL OF ARTHUR WINSLOW.

YES... YES... NO!... WELL, MAYBE...!

ALMOST AT ONCE, A SINISTER SYMBIOSIS IS ESTABLISHED, AND ARTHUR'S MIND IS EXTENDED ACROSS A UNIVERSE...!

IN A SINGLE FLEETING MOMENT, THE BELIEFS OF A LIFETIME ARE CONFIRMED.

THE COSMOS IS... AS HE ALWAYS THOUGHT IT WAS.

IT MUST BE. WOULD A STAR-SPAWNED TURNIP LIE??

"I am PHELCH," the turnip says telepathically, "and my race was old when the stars were young. We were a breed of aggressive, dynamic, success-oriented vegetables who overcame the limits of our roots and evolved into space-spanning GO-GETTERS, interstellar overachievers.

"Alas, we met our doom when we failed, in our vanity, to PICK ourselves at the first cosmic frost. I am the lone survivor, and I have wandered the trackless void for EONS in search of a more efficient BODY, suitable for framing my superior intellect and my incomparable power. Who are YOU? Speak, meat-being!"

Trepidatiously: "I am Arthur Winslow, author, and collector of old movie stills. I, too, am alone. For all my life I've been forced to endure a world in which no BACKGROUND MUSIC swells when boy meets girl, in which love has been dragged down from the spiritual HEIGHTS to the crass domain of PHYSICAL sensation.

"I stand APART, because I dare to believe in the power of what one man can do—the Lone Ranger, the Green Hornet, James Bond–the HEROES, the stuff of legends! I long to BE that kind of man, but all I can offer the world are FICTIONS that publishers refuse even to READ, because heroes have gone out of fashion!"

"Might I suggest a MERGER, then, Arthur-meat? You gain my insight into the universe, which has come to BORE me, whilst I avail myself of the mobility, the opposable thumb, and the pleasures of the flesh, which you DISDAIN, but which are denied to me by my form."

Winslow's eyes glow with anticipation. "If I agree to the joining, shall I get what it takes to become— a hero, a scourge of evil, a defender of the common man? Can you lend me power enough to fulfill my DREAM?"

"I can LEND you that. Yes," the turnip affirms. "But I demand an option on total control of your body if I DELIVER."

"What is the body but casing for what TRULY matters— the eternal soul! I agree to your bargain!" Winslow proclaims.

THERE FOLLOWS A BLINDING FLASH. FOR A MOMENT, ARTHUR WINSLOW LOSES TOUCH WITH HIS SURROUNDINGS, HIS BODY, EVEN HIS MIND. ALL IS BLACKNESS. ALL IS PURE CLEAR WHITE. AND THEN -- HE IS ONE WITH THE TURNIP!!

THE FOLLOWING AFTERNOON:

C'MON, TOOTS-- LET'S GET OFF AN' *HOOF* IT THE REST O' THE WAY TO ARTHUR'S HOUSE.

IT'S TOO *FAR* TO WALK. YOU'LL JUST HAVE TO LIVE WITH THE *STARES* A WHILE LONGER.

I'M STARTIN' TO FEEL... *SLIMY.*

ME, I DON'T EVEN *HAVE* A NAVEL. I ATTRACT LOOKS ON SHEER *CHARISMA* ALONE.

GUESS THAT'S THE PRICE OF--

BESIDES, I'M *ENJOYING* THIS. FOR ONCE, ALL EYES ARE GLUED TO MY *NAVEL.*

YEAH. SWELL. I'M TICKLED *PINK* FOR YA.

YOU--YOU *ANIMAL!*

WAUUK

NO SMOKING! *NO SMOKING* ON THIS BUS! I WON'T LOSE *MY* KIDNEYS TO THE LIKES OF *YOU!*

NIXON DEFENSE FUND

DRINK

CBS

KIDNEYS! *K-I-D-N-I-E-S!* I KNOW YOU'RE OUT TO *GET* 'EM!

wha...?

I RIDE THIS BUS ALL DAY-- BACK AND FORTH, BACK AND FORTH-- TO PROTECT MY KIDNEYS FROM YOU *BEASTS!*

YOU AND YOUR *TOBACCO*-- YOUR DEEP-FRIED *FOODS*-- YOUR WANTON WOMEN AND LOW *MORALS*--

--YOUR INTERNATIONAL KIDNEY-POISONING *CONSPIRACY!*

NO OFFENSE, GRANDMA, BUT YOU NEED *HELP.*

LOTS OF IT.

AND *FAST.*

OH, THAT'S *SO* TYPICAL OF *YOUR* KIND! *MOCKING* ME, BECAUSE I CAN'T FIND *ALLIES!*

YOU'RE *SO* SECURE IN YOUR ZEALOUSLY-GUARDED SECRECY--SO *SURE* JOHN Q. PUBLIC WON'T *BELIEVE* IN THE THREAT TO HIS *KIDNEYS.*

WELL, *I'LL* SHOW *YOU!*

SQUATCH!

I'M *WISE* TO YOU, BOY! THE WORLD MAY SNICKER *NOW,* BUT YOU'LL SEE-- YOU CAN'T HIDE THE TRUTH *FOR-EVER.* YOU'LL NEVER GET *MY*--

Aaah, *SHUDDUP,* YA BUG-BRAINED OLD *BAG!* WHO *CARES* ABOUT YOUR KIDNEYS?

I'M GOIN' FOR THE THROAT!!

YOU *SQUASHED* MY LAST CIGAR!

aaahk MURDER! *MURDER!!*

--OFF.

OWTCH

HEY-- *HEY!* WHAT'S GOIN' *ON* BACK THERE?! KNOCK IT--

CITY OF TRANSIT

WHAT'RE YA--? *MOVE!* LEMME STEER! GET OFF THAT *WHEEL*--

--OR YOU'LL KILL US ALL!

AT LAST! A CRISIS OF LIFE OR DEATH, MANAGEABLE ONLY BY--

PINK FLAMINGOS

EeEeEk

OoOh

≡WAAAUGH≡

OUR FATHER...

--TURNIP-MAN, GARDEN-FRESH GUARDIAN OF THE GOOD!

TURNING **INWARD** WHAT LITTLE MENTAL ENERGY HE STILL POSSESSES, ARTHUR WINSLOW CALLS UPON THE SPACE-TURNIP'S ABILITY TO EXERT CONTROL OVER ITS OWN **CHLOROPLASTS**, ITS PHOTOSYNTHETIC CELLS, AND--

SMOKE DEATH 120 MPH

2915 D

MARY JANE st.

STAN 'N' SOL'S MARKET

--HIS GRADE-A FANCY BEAM **HALTS** THE HURTLING VEHICLE IN MID-FLIGHT AND LOWERS IT SAFELY TO A ROADSIDE LANDING!

HOLY SPIT! WE'VE BEEN RESCUED-- BY A FLYING ***VEGETABLE!***

HOWARD-- uh, I THINK THAT'S ***ARTHUR!***

THE GUY IN THE ***SALAD SUIT?!***

HE'S ON ***MY*** SIDE! SALADS ARE ***GOOD*** FOR THE KIDNEYS!

SMOK

DULL St

BEVERLY -- IS THAT *YOU?* DID I REALLY SAVE *YOUR* LIFE?

YOU ARE... *ACQUAINTED* WITH THIS OTHER MEAT-BEING?

SHE'S BEVERLY SWITZLER-- THE GIRL YOU SAW IN MY *DREAMS* LAST NIGHT.

I WISH TO *TOUCH* THIS MEAT FEMALE.

NO-- *DON'T!* MY ARM-- *YOU* MOVED IT!

WHAD ARE YEW DROOING DWESSED WIKE THIF? WHA AWR YEW PINZHING MIH?

I'M NOT JUST PLAIN ARTHUR WINSLOW ANY LONGER, BEV. I'M LEADING A *DOUBLE LIFE* NOW.

SO I'D APPRECIATE IT IF YOU'D CALL ME *TURNIP-MAN* WHEN I'M IN *UNIFORM.*

THAT MUST REMAIN MY LITTLE *SECRET,* BEV -- ER, MISS SWITZLER. FOR NOW, *FAREW --*

HEY, WHAT *IS* THIS? WHY CAN'T I *FLY?*

BECAUSE *I* AM NOT YET READY TO *DEPART,* ARTHUR-MEAT!

BUT, ARTHUR, HOW DID YOU *GET* THIS WAY? THESE STRANGE NEW *POWERS--!*

SHORTLY, YOU'LL BE UNABLE TO DO *ANYTHING* WITHOUT MY *PERMISSION.*

I *TOLD* YOU-- I WANTED *ALL* OF YOU--AND MY ADVANCED INTELLECT IS *TAKING* IT, BIT BY BIT!

HEY, *WAITAMINIT,* BUB! TAKE YER SLEAZY LEAVES *OFF* HER!

I WISH TO EXPERIENCE WHAT YOU MEAT-BEINGS TERM... THE MAKING OF *WHOOPIE.*

waark NO *FAIR!* COME BACK AN' *FIGHT,* YA FRESH-PICKED FREAK!

SCRIPT FOR DUCK #2

LISTEN, ARTHUR-MEAT-- THERE'S THE BACKGROUND MUSIC YOU CRAVED. DO YOU *LIKE* IT?

ARTHUR, WHO ARE YOU *TALKING* TO? WHAT'S THAT *MUSIC?*

NO! YOU BETRAYED ME! AND NOW YOU'RE *TAUNTING* ME! I *DESPISE* YOU!

OH, COME NOW. YOU MERELY *DISLIKE* ME. I'VE HURT YOUR *FEELINGS*, THAT'S ALL.

DON'T YOU SEE -- IT'S YOUR PREDILECTION FOR MELODRAMATIC *ABSOLUTES* THAT'S MADE YOUR SILLY LIFE SUCH *TORTURE* ALL THESE YEARS?

HERE, ARTHUR-MEAT -- LET'S COME IN FOR A *LANDING.*

ARTHUR, THAT'S THE *JAMES BOND THEME--!*

THERE ARE NO *HEROES*, ARTHUR-MEAT-- NOR *VILLAINS*, EITHER. MERELY VARIOUS ENTITIES WITH VARIOUS *DESIRES.*

WHEN SOCIETY *APPROVES* OF THESE DESIRES, THE ENTITY IS DEEMED *GOOD*-- OR AT LEAST RESPECTABLE.

NO! IT'S A *LIE!*

WH-WHAT ABOUT STORIES WHERE THE HERO IS THE *RENEGADE* -- THE ANTI-ESTABLISHMENT FIGURE?

ESCAPIST *CLAPTRAP*, ARTHUR-MEAT-- A SAFETY VALVE FOR THE FRUSTRATIONS OF THE MASSES, ALLOWING THEM TO VENT THEIR HOSTILITIES *VICARIOUSLY.*

THAT'S WHAT *YOU'VE* BEEN DOING ARTHUR -- LIVING YOUR *LIFE* THROUGH OTHERS' FANTASIES AND YOUR OWN.

AND IT *IS* A PITY: NOW THAT YOU'RE IN A POSITION TO EXPERIENCE A *REAL* SENSATION...

... IT'S *I* WHO'LL REAP THE BENEFITS.

IF I HAD ANY BRAINS AT *ALL*, I'D PRETEND THIS NEVER *HAPPENED.*

RIGHT. I'D TELL MYSELF: "SELF, *FORGET* THE CHICK AND THINK ABOUT *NUMERO UNO.*"

BUT YOU KIDNEY-ROBBERS STICK *TOGETHER!* YOU CAN'T FOOL *ME!*

WELL, I DO!

I MEAN... THAT LEAFY LUNATIC COULD MAKE *DUCK SOUP* OUTTA ME...

AND I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHERE HE'D *TAKE* HER...

HE'D TAKE HER TO A *GREEN* PLACE-- AWAY FROM THE FILTH OF THE *CITY*-- WHERE HER KIDNEYS COULD *RECOVER* AND SHE'D REGAIN HER *SANITY!*

HE'D TAKE HER TO *SUNSPOT SLOPE* -- SO NAMED BECAUSE IT'S THE ONLY *SPOT* IN CLEVELAND THAT GETS ANY *SUN!*

GRANNY, IF I WEREN'T POSITIVE YOUR *LIPS* ARE AS *CALCIFIED* AS YOUR *BRAIN*-- I'D *KISS* YA!

HUH--? WHERE? *THERE?*

YOU WOULDN'T *DARE!* ORAL INTIMACY *DISGUSTS* ME! AND IT PLAYS *HAVOC* WITH THE *KIDNEYS!*

BETTER YOU SHOULD *FLEE!* THESE OLD LEGS CAN'T FOLLOW-- BUT I KNOW TWO *NEW* LEGS THAT *CAN!*

AND I *WARN* YOU-- I'LL BE IN *TOUCH* WITH THOSE LEGS *SOON!*

AND WHEN THE PERSON WHO *OWNS* THEM FINDS OUT WHAT YOU TRIED TO DO TO MY *KIDNEYS*--!

*BUT THE FOWL IS ALREADY OUT OF **EARSHOT** AND DOES NOT HEAR THE WOMAN'S PECULIAR THREAT.*

*HE MAY LIVE TO **REGRET** THAT LAPSE -- AND THEN AGAIN, HE MAY **NOT.** FOR HE HAS CHOSEN TO SNEAK A RIDE INTO THE MAW OF **DEATH**...!*

EGESTION EXPRESS

*WELL, HECK, HE **DOES** OWE THE GIRL A **FAVOR.***

EXACTLY 54 MINUTES LATER:

Y-YOU SURE CAN *SUSTAIN* A LEVEL OF *AROUSAL*, ARTHUR...!

DRESSING UP AS A TURNIP SEEMS TO HAVE *CHANGED* YOU SOMEHOW.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO TURN OVER SOME OF MY NEW *LEAVES*, BEVERLY?

OOH! THE SAME OLD NAIVE DOUBLE-ENTENDRES!

WHY DOES SHE *REACT* THUS? I FOLLOWED *YOUR* THOUGHT-PATTERNS IN *CONSTRUCTING* IT.

BEV, PLEASE-- *I* DIDN'T *SAY* THAT!

BUT YOU *DID*. OR YOU *WOULD* HAVE IF *YOU* WERE CONTROLLING YOUR TONGUE AT THE TIME.

IT DID *PUZZLE* ME... YOUR NEED TO *MASK* YOUR TRUE FEELINGS IN MULTIPLE MEANINGS...!

SHUT UP! STOP MAKING *FUN* OF ME!

ARTHUR, I WASN'T-- I MEAN-- IT'S JUST-- WELL, SOMEONE SO *CLEVER* SHOULDN'T HAVE TO BE SO *CHILDISH!*

OH, LORD-- BEV, IT'S THE *TURNIP!* IT'S TAKEN CONTROL OF MY BODY! IT'S TRYING TO DESTROY MY *MIND* NOW, TOO!

SHE *WON'T* BELIEVE YOU, ARTHUR-MEAT. I WON'T *ALLOW* HER TO.

I'LL MOVE YOUR TONGUE AGAIN-- MAKE YOUR LIPS SAY IT WAS ALL A *JOKE*.

GIVE UP, ARTHUR-MEAT. I'VE FULFILLED *MY* PART OF THE BARGAIN AND MADE YOU A "*HERO*".

NOW, AS A MATTER OF *HONOR*-- HAND OVER YOUR *HEAD!!*

NO!

TOOTS! YOU OKAY? WHAT'S WITH HIM? HIS TURNIP TOO *TIGHT*?

HOWARD! I-- I DON'T *KNOW!* HE'S *CONVERSING* WITH IT, I THINK.

HE SAYS IT'S GOT A MIND OF ITS *OWN* OR SOMETHING.

YEAH? WELL, IT AIN'T *IMPOSSIBLE.* BELIEVE ME, I'VE SEEN *STRANGER* THINGS...!

MAY AS WELL GIVE IT A *YANK* AN' SEE WHAT--

--HAPPENS?

WAAAAUGH

CLUNF

owtch

MAYBE... WHAT'S NEEDED HERE IS ANOTHER *APPROACH.*

LET'S GO AT IT *LOGICALLY.* NO SENTIENT TURNIP WITH A SURVIVAL INSTINCT IS GONNA LET ITSELF BE HOLLOWED OUT AND USED AS SOME WACKO'S *CHAPEAU,* UNLESS--

AW, FOR CRYIN' OUT LOUD--OF *COURSE!* THE *BULB* IS JUST *DECORA-TION!*

THE BRAINS ARE IN THE GREENS!

MEAT-- TO BE *BRUISED!* AND BONES-- TO BE *CRUSHED!*

FOOL! THIS WON'T STOP ME! YOU, TOO, ARE MERE *MEAT!*

Uh-oh.

IT'S GONE *BERSERK*-- FLYIN' BLIND-- MUST NEED ITS BULB TO *SEE*--

--FOR ALL THE GOOD *THAT'S* GONNA DO ME.

DIE, MEAT! DIE, DIE, *DIE!!*

ON THE *OTHER* HAND...

...MAYBE I CAN *GUIDE* ITS FLIGHT!

THE SCIENTISTS BACK *HOME* SAY WE *DUCKS* ONCE HAD WINGS--BACK IN PREHISTORIC DAYS.

YEAH -- I'M GETTIN' THE *HANG* OF IT! THIS IS GONNA BE CLOSE, BUT--

EEYAAAGH

--GOTCHA!

NOW ALL I GOTTA DO IS SURVIVE MY *VICTORY!*

A VERITABLE *CINCH*. I COULD DO IT AGAIN WITH MY *EYES* CLOSED.

IN FACT... I THINK THAT'S HOW I DID IT THIS TIME.

LATER, IN THE REPENTENT WRITER'S APARTMENT...

I HOPE YOU'VE *LEARNED* SOME-THING FROM ALL THIS, ARTHUR.

RATMAN

YES. THERE CAN BE PROFOUND MEANING IN LIFE *WITHOUT* HEROICS. THE UNI-VERSE *ISN'T* A MELODRAMA, BUT A VAST PANORAMA OF BANAL HUMANITY. MAN'S SOUL MAY LEAP TO THE HEIGHTS OF FANTASY, BUT ITS TRUE VALUE IS DOWN HERE IN THE *MUD*, WHERE THE REAL *TROUBLE* IS.

HOW 'BOUT --YOU'RE JUST NOT *QUALIFIED* TO GIVE *ADVICE* ON THE SUBJECT, HUH?

POW

NEXT: *THE KIDNEY LADY'S BIZARRE REVENGE -- AS HOWARD, HIS LIFE PLACED ONCE MORE IN PERIL, IS FORCED TO SEEK INNER PEACE AND A MEANS BY WHICH TO SMASH FACES IN...*

MASTER OF QUAK-FU

SPECIAL THANKS TO JUDO JIM STARLIN FOR HIS ASSISTANCE IN LAYING-OUT THIS MOST CHALLENGING SCRIPT!

STILL ONLY 25¢

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TRAPPED IN A WORLD HE NEVER MADE!

HOWARD THE DUCK™

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

MARTIAL-ARTS MAYHEM AS YOU'VE NEVER SEEN IT BEFORE--WHEN HOWARD BECOMES

MASTER OF QUACK FU!

TM

BUCKLER & LEIALOHA

From the time of his hatching, he was...different. A potentially brilliant scholar who dreaded the structured environment of school, he educated himself in the streets, taking whatever work was available, formulating his philosophy of self from what he learned of the world about him. And then the Cosmic Axis shifted...and that world *changed.* Suddenly, he was stranded in a universe he could not fathom. Without warning, he became a strange fowl in an even stranger land.

Stan Lee PRESENTS: HOWARD THE DUCK!™

JV210

WRITTEN BY STEVE GERBER * ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN BUSCEMA * INKED BY STEVE LEIALOHA * EDITED BY MARV WOLFMAN

ANNETTE KAWECKI, LETTERER — MICHELE WOLFMAN, COLORIST

Four Feathers of Death!

or: ENTER: THE DUCK!

SATURDAY NIGHT IN CLEVELAND: THE MIDNIGHT SHOWING OF THE YEAR'S HIGHEST-GROSSING (AND, COINCIDENTALLY, GORIEST) KUNG FU THRILLER HAS JUST CONCLUDED, AND AN APPRECIATIVE AUDIENCE TAKES TO THE STREETS.

BEVERLY SWITZLER AND HOWARD THE DUCK ALSO DEPART THE THEATRE.

HOW CAN YOU CALL RIPPING OUT SOMEBODY'S TONGUE "ENTERTAINMENT"?

HOW CAN YOU CALL IT A MARTIAL ART?

AND =PHWAUGGH= HOW CAN YOU EAT AFTER WATCHING THAT?!

JEEZ, IT'S ONLY A MOVIE, HOWARD.

YEAH? LOOKS MORE LIKE *BASIC TRAINING* FOR THE NEIGHBORHOOD *TROOPS!* I--

HAI-EEE-TSA!!

=WAAAUGH=

MAKE *ROOM*-- FOR A TRUE BROTHER OF THE PANTHER!

IS THAT YOUR WHOLE ACT, KID? CAN WE *APPLAUD* AN' MOVE ON, OR--?

Y-YOU'RE A *DUCK!!* A TALKING *DUCK!!*

AN' YOU'RE THE POOR MAN'S *SONNY CHIBA.* SO WHAT ELSE IS NEW?

N-NOTHIN', I GUESS. I MEAN, I DIDN'T MEAN--UH, *SEE YA!*

CHEESH--LIKE YOU *HAIRLESS APES* HAVEN'T SCREWED UP YOUR WORLD *ENOUGH!*

YOU *MISREPRESENT* AN ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY, *PACKAGE* IT AS A VIOLENT ENTERTAINMENT-- AND SELL IT TO YOUR *YOUNG* TO EMULATE! =WECCH=

WOW...!

ONE WAY

SOMEHOW I NEVER *PEGGED* YOU AS AN *INTELLECTUAL,* DUCKY.

DON'T CALL ME *NAMES,* TOOTS.

YOU DON'T GOTTA TAKE OUT A MORTGAGE ON AN *IVORY TOWER* TO RECOGNIZE *STUPIDITY* WHEN YOU SEE IT!

C'MON, LET'S GRAB A BITE, AN-- =WAUUP=

YA FREAKIN' *FORTUNE COOKIES!* WATCH WHERE YER--

SHH! HOWARD-- *ENOUGH.* DON'T PROVOKE THEM! SHOO--INSIDE-- *GO.*

HAIEE HEEYAH CHOYEE

INSIDE...

HOLY CROW-- THEY'RE *EVERY-WHERE!* IT'S A *DISEASE!*

HOWARD--KNOCK IT *OFF,* WILLYA? OR AT LEAST DROP YOUR *QUACK* A FEW THOUSAND DECIBELS? DON'T BROADCAST YOUR OPINION TO--

LOOK, SISTER--YOU'RE RAISING A WHOLE *GENERA-TION* HERE WHO'RE GONNA THINK THE *STREET FIGHT* IS THE HIGHEST FORM OF ARTISTIC EXPRESSION.

EVER *BEEN* IN A STREET BRAWL, BEV? EVER SEE A KID'S *FACE* AFTER A *CLUB* OR *BRASS KNUCKLES* OR A *BROKEN BOTTLE* HAS DONE ITS WORK?

NO...

YEAH, WELL... SOME PUNKS *FEED* ON THE SIGHT, 'SPECIALLY IF *THEY* DID THE DAMAGE.

THEY *NEED* IT, Y'KNOW? 'CAUSE THEY AIN'T GOT THE *MENTAL* EQUIPMENT TO BE SURE THEY *EXIST,* UNLESS THEY FEEL THAT SENSE OF *POWER.*

SO YOU GLORIFY *VIOLENCE* LIKE THIS, MAKE IT *SOCIALLY ACCEPTABLE,* AN' BELIEVE ME--

=OOOH=

--SOMEBODY'S GONNA GET HURT.

HIT THE DECK!

SPLCHANGL!

CRIPES, WE'RE BEIN' *FIRED ON--* BY A *HUMAN CANNONBALL!*

HOWARD, IT'S THE *KID* WHO--!

I KNEW IT, *I KNEW IT...!*

STAND AWAY! TOUCH HIM, TRY TO *HELP* HIM--AND YOU, TOO, WILL BE *MAIMED, CRIPPLED,* OR *DISFIGURED* BY--

--*COUNT MACHO!*

UH, LOOK, CHAMP--YOU'RE COMIN' ON PRETTY *HEAVY.*

I THINK THE KID GOT THE *MESSAGE.* WHY DON'TCHA--?

HE *ATTACKED* ME! BLOCKED MY PATH! RAISED HIS HAND TO *STRIKE* ME!

NO *MAN* THREATENS COUNT MACHO --AND *LIVES!*

TWAP!

WAAAUK!

B-BUT HE'S *NOT* A MAN! HE'S BARELY INTO *PUBERTY!*

WHY DON'T YOU PICK ON SOMEONE YOUR OWN *SIZE?*

MAN OR BOY--HE MUST PAY THE *PRICE*-- FOR AFFRONTING A *MASTER* OF THE DEADLY ARTS!

Y-YOU'RE *CRAZY,* MAN--IT WAS A *JOKE,* THAT'S ALL! I DIDN'T MEAN--

I AM NOT ONE TO BE *TOYED* WITH. I CONSIDER *EVERY* ATTACK TO BE *REAL...*

...AND DEAL WITH IT *ACCORDINGLY.*

HAI-EEEE!!

BUNK

UHHHNH!

HIEE-YAW!

SOME MASTER! COMES EQUIPPED WITH FOUR GOONS TO BACK HIM UP IF A KID HALF HIS SIZE PROVES TOO MUCH--

NUNUNGH

JEFFREY!!

THE YOUNG MAN FALLS-- AND SUDDENLY THE FRACAS IS NO LONGER MERELY AN INCIDENT, BUT A CREATURE, SUCKING, VORACIOUS, WITH A LIFE OF ITS OWN.

ONE BY ONE, OTHERS ARE DRAWN INTO THE FRAY, SPURRED BY A SENSE OF FAIR PLAY, BY FEAR OF DANGER TO THEIR COMPANIONS...

...OR BY THE SHEER JOY THAT SOME PERVERTED SOULS DERIVE FROM PUNCHING ANOTHER HUMAN BEING IN THE FACE.

IN MOMENTS, BEFORE EVEN THE COMBATANTS REALIZE WHAT HAS OCCURRED, ONE MAN'S NEED TO PROVE HIS POTENCY...

...HAS ESCALATED INTO A MELÉE.

SPEECHLESS, THE DUCK GAPES AT WHAT SEEMS A WALL OF BALD-APE BODIES, A MONOLITHIC MASS OF FLESH THAT EXPANDS, CONTRACTS, EXPANDS...

...AS IF ATTEMPTING TO SQUEEZE ITSELF TO DEATH.

AND THEN HOWARD'S EYES RIVET ON A SINGLE DETAIL.

THE INEVITABLE WEAPON, WIELDED ANONYMOUSLY.

A SHRILL **TREBLE** SLICES THROUGH THE DULL BASS DIN OF THE ROW.

A PIERCING CRY OF **PAIN.** A CRY OF **PIERCING** PAIN. WHICHEVER.

THE BOY'S BRIGHT FACE GOES **PALLID.** THE STRENGTH **DRAINS** FROM HIS LEGS.

HE FALLS TO THE COUNTER CLUTCHING AT--BUT IT **CAN'T BE!**--A **HOLE** IN HIS **BODY?**

MY GOD--HE'S BEEN **STABBED!!**

AS SWIFTLY AS IT APPEARED, THE BLADE HAS **VANISHED.** THE FIGHT-CREATURE DISSOLVES IN **PANIC.** ITS LIMBS **DETACH** AND GO THEIR SEPARATE WAYS.

AND **CERTAIN** OF THOSE LIMBS SEEM INORDINATELY **CONTENTED,** EVEN **JOCUND,** ABOUT THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE CREATURE'S DEMISE.

UH... **HOLD IT,** YOU TURKEYS!

MAYBE YOU BOZOS DIDN'T **NOTICE**--BEIN' **MASTERS** AN' ALL--I MEAN, I FIGURE YOU'RE SO **USED** TO IT--

--BUT THAT KID BACK THERE WAS **BLEEDIN'!**

HUNNGGH

AND, SEE, MUCH AS I HATE TA POKE MY **BEAK** INTA THINGS LIKE THIS, I--

WEE-AAUGH

HAI-EE!

OFF ME! INSINUATE WHAT YOU PLEASE--BUT KNOW YOU DO SO IN PERIL OF YOUR **LIFE!**

WHILE THE WATERFOWL LIES SPRAWLED ON THE PAVEMENT, MACHO ESCAPES. AND INSIDE THE DINER...

...STOP THE BLEEDING!

PUT HIS LEGS UP!

TALK TO 'IM! KEEP 'IM AWAKE!

OH, GOD-- I'M GONNA BE SICK!

AGITATION OF A DIFFERENT SORT PERMEATES THE CROWD. THEY ARE CHARGED PARTICLES, WHIRLING ABOUT THE NUCLEUS OF THEIR CONCERN--THE WOUNDED BOY.

BUT THE VALENCES ARE ALL WRONG--NO COHESION-- THE ELECTRONS COLLIDE, HAMPER ONE ANOTHER'S MOVEMENT.

AND THE NUCLEUS IS SPLITTING, DYING.

IN ALL THE FLURRY OF ACTIVITY, TWO WORDS HAVE GONE UNSPOKEN:

POLICE... AMBULANCE...

SHE PRAYS THEY ARRIVE IN TIME TO SAVE THE BOY FROM THE CROWD'S ATTEMPTS TO HELP HIM.

AND WHILE SHE WAITS, A COLD, CLAMMY SWEAT BEADS ON HER PALMS.

HER EYES CANNOT FIND THE DUCK.

HE FOLLOWED COUNT MACHO OUT THE WINDOW, SHE REMEMBERS.

HE WAS ALONE, UNARMED. WHAT IF--?

BUT--NO.

HOWARD!! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?!

I'M SWELL, CAN'TCHA TELL BY LOOKIN'?

HOW'S THE KID? WHAT'S GOIN' ON IN HERE?

PANIC-- BLIND AND DEAF.

I CAN'T GET CLOSE ENOUGH TO FIND OUT--

IF YOU COULD-- COULDJA HELP?

WELL...I TOOK FIRST AID THE SUMMER I WORKED AS A LIFEGUARD...

SAY NO MORE.

JUST LEAVE IT TO ME. THE WORST WE CAN DO IS KEEP 'EM FROM SUFFOCATIN' THE POOR GUY!

B-BE CAREFUL, DUCKY...!

DON'T WORRY, TOOTS--DANGER IS MY BUSINESS.

SHARP, SPINDLY ELBOWS PUSHING, PRODDING, POKING PAST KNEES AND THIGHS, HOWARD REACHES THE CENTER OF THE MOB...!

I'M ONLY GONNA SAY THIS ONCE: BACK OFF! YOU ARE ALL BEHAVING ABOMINABLY!

Y-YOU'RE A DUCK!!

GIVE THE LADY A CIGAR --LONG AS IT AIN'T ONE O' MINE--AN' KEEP 'ER MOVIN.

NURSE! YOUR PATIENT'S WAITIN' IMPATIENTLY!

HUH? OH...!

C'MON-- BE GOOD SHEEP, BA-A-ACK! BA-A-A-ACK!

WHO MADE YOU THE GENERAL?

YEAH-- WE DON'T WANNA MISS NOTHIN'-- AN' WE AIN'T TAKIN' ORDERS FROM A MIDGET IN A DUCK SUIT!

TOUGH, MAC--THE SHOW'S OVER. MOVE YOUR BUTT!

TOMPKINS!*

YOU!!

* WHOM THE DUCK FIRST MET IN GIANT-SIZE MAN-THING #4. --MARV.

I SHOULD'A KNOWN! THAT BROAD A FRIEND O' YOURS? WHAT'S SHE--?

STOW IT, FLAT-FOOT! SHE'S A NURSE! AN' THE KID'S BLEEDIN' TO DEATH!

SAVE THE HARD-BOILED COP ROUTINE FOR LATER!

PERHAPS IT'S THE SHEER PREPOSTEROUSNESS OF IT--THOSE WORDS OF REASON EMANATING FROM A DUCK--BUT TOMPKINS AND THE MEDICS RESPOND, QUICKLY, EFFICIENTLY.

THEY WANT ME TO GO WITH THEM. HOW MANY YEARS CAN YOU GET FOR IMPERSONATING A NURSE?

KEEP SMILIN'--AND THE JUDGE'LL GO EASY ON YA.

AND SO IT APPEARS, FOR NOW, TO BE OVER--THE FUROR STILLED, THE VIOLENCE QUELLED...

...EXCEPT IN THE PALPITANT BREAST OF THE FOWL.

LOOK AT 'EM-- ONCE IT'S OUTTA THEIR SIGHT, IT'S JUST A STORY TO TELL AT THE OFFICE ON MONDAY.

GUESS I'M NOT AS JADED AS I THOUGHT.

BEV HAS THE KEYS...CAN'T GO HOME...TOO *WIRED*, ANYWAY, TO RELAX...

FOR THE DISCRIMINATING ADULT BIBLIOPHILE

LAVENDER FLAMINGO BOOKSHOPE

HMMM... MAYBE SOME *READING* MATTER... TAKE MY WEARY MIND OFF...

...MARTIAL ARTS.

UH, I THINK I'M GONNA BE *ILL.*

CARLIN'S WILD NIGHT!

MARVEL COMICS

HERMAN the SLUG!

NO BROWSING!

OUTSIDE the INDUSTRY

THIS MEANS YOU!!

FIGHT! FIGHT! FIGHT!

BRUCE LEE

ADULTS ONL

MARTIAL ARTS

For LOVE or $$$... PERSPIRATION

YOU TOO CAN GROW! BEFORE AFTER

THE DUCK'S **NAUSEA** TURNS TO GRIM, ALMOST MACABRE **FASCINATION.** SMALL **WONDER** THIS WORLD SEEMS SO GRIM, SO HUMORLESS...

...IF, AS EVIDENCED BY THESE PERIODICALS, IT IS **FUELED** ON CHEAP SEX AND VICARIOUS VIOLENCE.

DEADLY FEET OF KUNG FU!

BLACK BELT KIL

KARATE DEAT

PUNCH MAMA MUR

FEBRUARY 76

"POISON FINGERS OF KUNG FU"..."THE NINJA: MASTER OF SILENT DEATH"..."HOW TO BE PREPARED WHEN A SAMURAI ATTACKS *YOU*"...

≥PHWAAUGH≤ I DON'T *BELIEVE*-- HUH--WAITAMINIT-- WHAT'S *THIS*...?

FREE! HOW TO MAKE MILLIONS IN YOUR SPARE TIME!

DEADLY F OF KU

IF THIS IS ON THE *LEVEL*, I COULD TRACK DOWN MACHO *MYSELF*--GIVE 'IM A TASTE OF HIS OWN *MEDICINE.*

THE SCHOOL'S HERE IN *CLEVELAND*--JUST A COUPLE BLOCKS AWAY--WHAT THE HECK?--WHY *NOT*?!

SEN NO

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

AGE.....

PHONE.....

SECRETS OF KUNG FU REVEALED!

NO TRICKS! NO SKILL OR PREVIOUS TRAINING REQUIRED! MIND AND BODY TUNED IN MINUTES! LEARN KUNG FU, KARATE, T'AI CHI, AIKIDO, AND EASTERN PROVERBS FOR ALL OCCASIONS.

MASTER C'HAAJ MARTIAL ARTS EXTRAVAGANZA
7014 OAK STREET
(AT CORNER ELM)
LEVELAND, OHIO
24 HOURS

SHORTLY...

MASTER C'HAAJ MARTIAL EXTRAVAGANZA (COME IN AND BROWSE)

FUNNY... I'VE GOT THE *SPOOKIEST* FEELING I'VE WALKED IN A *CIRCLE...!*

IN FACT, EXCEPT FOR THE *SIGN...*

...AAH, BUT *EVERYTHING* IN CLEVELAND LOOKS ALIKE!

IF I WASN'T PUT OFF BY A SLEAZOID *BOOK-STORE,* WHY SHOULD A SEAMY *GYM* RUFFLE MY FEATHERS?

HECK, A LITTLE DOWN-HOME *DEGENERACY* NEVER ST--

=WAAAUGH=

WELCOME, INITIATE--ENTER AND BE AT *PEACE.* YOU HAVE BEEN SHOWN YOUR FIRST *LESSON,* FREE OF CHARGE,

THE FACE WHICH A MAN PRESENTS TO THE WORLD NEED IN NO WAY BE INDICATIVE OF THE SOUL IT *MASKS.*

BE SEATED.

*EVEN AS HOWARD ATTEMPTS TO COPE WITH THIS MASSIVE **INCONGRUITY,** BEVERLY FACES A LOGICAL--AND **TRAGIC**--CONCLUSION.*

...JUST A MINUTE AGO. THE DOCTORS DID WHAT THEY COULD, BUT...

I'LL BE *GOING* NOW, OFFICER TOMPKINS. YOU HAVE MY ADDRESS IF YOU *NEED ME.*

SURE. I UNDERSTAND IT'S ROUGH...!

*WILL ANYTHING BE **DONE,** BEV WONDERS. WILL DOING ANYTHING **MATTER?** DEATH IS DEATH, ISN'T IT? UNCHANGEABLE? IRREVERSIBLE?*

*LOST IN THOUGHT, SHE WALKS ON **MECHANICALLY,** MIND DETACHED FROM BODY, FROM SENSORIUM...!*

SHE NEVER **HEARS** MACHO'S CRONIES PADDING CATLIKE AT HER HEELS. INDEED, EVEN WHEN THEY ARE **UPON** HER...

...A MOMENT PASSES BEFORE HER BRAIN INTERPRETS AND INFORMS HER OF THE TACTILE SENSATION, THE STEELY-COLD **CLAMP** OF THEIR FINGERS.

SHE IS SPIRITED AWAY, INTO THE NIGHT... WHILE **HOWARD'S** SPIRIT RETURNS AND IS NOURISHED.

...AND **THAT,** IN A NUTSHELL, IS WHAT **BROUGHT** ME HERE. I CAN'T HACK SITTIN' ON MY **TAIL FEATHERS** WHILE THAT **MANIAC** IS ON THE LOOSE.

MOST ADMIRABLE. BUT **PRUDENCE** GUIDES EVERY ACTION OF THE SUPERIOR MAN. WHAT DO YOU **KNOW** OF YOUR ADVERSARY BESIDES HIS SELF-AGGRANDIZING **NAME?**

ZILCH--EXCEPT THAT HE WAS WEARIN' **THIS.** IT CAME UNHOOKED WHEN I **TACKLED** 'IM.

I FEAR... HE WAS ONE OF MY OWN **STUDENTS,** THEN. WE OFFER THAT CHARM--FOR ONLY $5.98--TO **ALL** OUR GRADUATES.

BUT THIS PERSON, OBVIOUSLY, IS OF UNSCRUPULOUS CHARACTER AND **MISUSES** MY TEACHINGS.

IT IS NECESSARY, I THINK, HE BE TAUGHT ONE LESSON **MORE.**

AND FOR THIS FINAL INSTRUCTION, **YOU** SHALL BE HIS TEACHER, POND-HOPPER.

YOU GOT YOURSELF A **DEAL,** MASSA! WHERE DO WE START?

IN THE UNSEEN WORLD BEHIND YOUR **EYES.** YOUR **METAPHYSICAL** PREPARATION PRECEDES ALL ELSE.

LESSON ONE:

BEHOLD: A LIVE CATERPILLAR AND A DEAD BUTTERFLY. WHICH OF THE TWO WOULD YOU CHOOSE TO **BE?**

THE CATERPILLAR, NATCH! IT'S STILL **BREATHIN'!**

WRONG. THE CATERPILLAR IS TWO METAMORPHOSES **BEHIND** THE BUTTERFLY ON THE PATH TO ETERNAL LIFE.

HUH?

LESSON TWO:

BEHOLD--MY HAND AND THE FLAME! WHY DOES THE FLESH NOT **MELT** FROM MY HAND?

UH... EITHER YA DO IT WITH **MIRRORS,** OR YOU'RE **TOUGHER** THAN YA **LOOK.**

WRONG. IT IS BECAUSE I **WILL** IT THUS. THE MIND MASTERS THE **BODY.** THE BODY RESISTS THE **FLAME.**

HUH...?

THE **PHYSICAL** ASPECT OF THE DUCK IS DEVELOPED NEXT. HE LEARNS THE BALANCE AND POISE NECESSARY TO MASTER THE **STAFF.** HIS REFLEXES ARE HONED TO PRECISION. HE LEARNS TO **MOVE** FASTER THAN THE EYE CAN FOLLOW, TO REACT FASTER THAN EVEN A STEEL BLADE CAN TRAVEL.

HE LEARNS THE POSTURES OF ATTACK AND DEFENSE.

HE LEARNS TO APPLY THE STRENGTH OF HIS **WILL** TO THE BREAKING OF **MATERIAL** BARRIERS.

YOUR FINAL LESSON, PONDHOPPER: THE IRRELEVANCE OF CHRONOLOGICAL TIME TO THE ENLIGHTENMENT OF MAN OR FOWL.

YOUR WILL TO ACHIEVE HAS ENABLED YOU TO COMPLETE A LIFETIME OF STUDY IN A MERE ***THREE HOURS AND SEVENTEEN MINUTES!***

YOUR ***MEDALLION...!***

=CHOKE= I AM HONORED, MASTER.

AND THIS MOST ***SPECIAL*** OF GIFTS IS ALSO FOR YOU...

NEW ***THREADS?***

SILKEN ONES, HOWARD THE DUCK. GO BEHIND THE CURTAIN. ***CHANGE.***

DON THIS NEW GARB, THIS UNSULLIED CLOTH IN WHICH TO DRAPE YOUR BODY...

...THIS OUTWARD REFLECTION OF YOUR NEWLY-RAISED ***CONSCIOUSNESS.***

I RECHRISTEN YOU ***SHANG-OP***--WHICH MEANS THE "RISING AND ADVANCING OF A DUCK."

SHANG-OP--WHOSE FLASHING FEATHERED FINGERS AND INDOMITABLE COURAGE MAKE HIM--***MASTER OF QUAK FU!***

I DUNNO IF I'D GO *THAT* FAR--BUT I GOTTA ADMIT, IT'S BEEN A *VALUABLE* THREE HOURS.

WHICH, UH, *REMINDS* ME--

HOW MUCH DO I *OWE* Y--

WAAUGH!

I'M STILL IN THE LAVENDER FLAMINGO!!

I MUST'A *FANTASIZED* THE WHOLE THING! I MUST'A BEEN STANDIN' HERE ALL THE TI--

THIS WAY TO EXIT

ONLY... IF *THAT'S* WHAT HAPPENED, WHERE'D I GET THESE YIN-YANG P.J.'S?

NO... IT WASN'T A *DREAM.* IT COULDN'T'VE BEEN. AND ANYWAY, WHAT IF IT *WAS?*

DREAMS'RE JUST ANOTHER LEVEL OF *REALITY,* RIGHT? I *TOOK* THAT MARTIAL ARTS COURSE --I CAN *FEEL* IT-- I CAN REMEMBER ALL THE *MOVES!*

I JUST CAN'T BELIEVE HE LET ME GO WITHOUT *PAYING--* THAT'S WHAT'S *WEIRD!*

*HIS WADDLE ACCELERATES TO A RUN. HE IS ANXIOUS TO LEAVE THIS SEEDY NEIGHBORHOOD WITH ALL ITS SHADOW-CLOAKED MYSTERIES **BEHIND** HIM.*

*HE LONGS TO RECOUNT HIS STRANGE EXPERIENCE TO BEVERLY, TO **SHARE** WITH HER THE AWE, THE WONDER, THE SPACEY STOMACH OF HAVING PASSED THROUGH THE REALM OF THE **UNEXPLAINABLE.***

*WHEN HE ARRIVES AT THE APARTMENT, HOWEVER, THOSE CONCERNS ARE SUPERCEDED BY ANOTHER--FAR MORE URGENT... AND **SINISTER.***

NUTS, YOU'D THINK HE COULD JUST USE *TAPE,* BUT *NO,* HE--

OBOY. NEVER FIGURED ON *THIS--!*

To whom it may concern:
If you wanna see you-know-who you-know-how again, bring you-know-what to top of the construction site at the corner of Hueno and Wayre Streets you know-when.

Guess Who?

"MACHO WANTS HIS *DRAGON MEDALLION* BACK," HOWARD MUTTERS, "AND HE'S WILLING TO *KILL* TO GET IT."

ANSWERS, PRETTY LADY--OR MY *NUNCHAKU* WILL CRUSH YOUR LOVELY HIGH CHEEK-BONES INTO *POWDER*.

WHO WAS YOUR FRIEND--THE *MIDGET* IN THE *DUCK-SUIT*-- AND WHERE HAS HE TAKEN MY MEDALLION?

THE *TRUTH*, PRETTY LADY!

I *TOLD* YOU THE TRUTH!

THERE *IS* NO "MIDGET"--HOWARD'S *REALLY* A DUCK. AND I DON'T *KNOW* ABOUT ANY MED--

YOU POOR LITTLE FOOL. TO PERSIST IN THOSE LIES--HAS COST YOU YOUR *LIFE*.

SWING HER OUT--OVER THE *EDGE* OF THE ROOF!

HEAR ME WELL, PRETTY LADY. YOU'VE SEEN FOR YOURSELF THAT I WILL GO TO ANY LENGTH TO PRESERVE MY *HONOR*.

I AM CAPABLE OF FAR *MORE* VIOLENCE WHEN MY *FREEDOM* IS AT STAKE.

SPEAK! TELL THE TRUTH! *NOW!* OR--

AW, BUTTON YER *LIP*, YA PUNY, PUSILLANIMOUS, PEA-BRAINED PUGILIST!

WHAT?! WHO DARES--?!

AH, C'MON--KNOCK OFF THE *COMIC-BOOK* DIALOGUE, WILLYA?

WHAT'S SO *DARING* ABOUT CALLING *YOU* NAMES? YOU'RE A BIG, HAIRY, BARREL-CHESTED *MOUTH* WITH NOTHIN' TO BACK IT UP!

WHY YOU--!

GET HIM! BREAK THOSE *PIPECLEANERS* HE CALLS *ARMS*--AND *WASTE* HIM!

NOW *THAT'S* MORE LIKE IT. BACK TO YOUR *ROOTS*--THE *GUTTER*.

HAI-
FONK
DONP
EEE-
CHUNT
BRUK
CHI!
YA-
YOU'RE FRESH OUTTA GOONS, COUNT. LOOKS LIKE YER GONNA HAVE TA TAKE ME ON YOURSELF--
--ASSUMING YOU'RE MAN ENOUGH, YA SISSY!
THE ULTIMATE INSULT--SIGNED, SEALED, DELIVERED.
LIVID WITH RAGE, MACHO CEASES HIS BOASTFUL DECLAMATIONS. HIS VOICE BECOMES AN ANIMALISTIC GRUNT AND SNARL AS, SUCKING IN AIR, TENSING EVERY MUSCLE, HE WORKS UP HIS CHI--HIS FIGHTING SPIRIT.
WHEN HIS BODY AND MIND ARE NAUGHT BUT PURE DESTRUCTIVE ENERGY--
HE ATTACKS!!
HOWARD SIDESTEPS MOST OF THE BLOW--BUT A FRACTION OF THE IMPACT CATCHES HIS SHOULDER.
AND EVEN THAT FRACTION IS ENOUGH TO DRAW BLOOD--AND SEND THE FOWL CAREENING BACKWARD--!

HE PLUNGES TOWARD WHAT **SHOULD** BE CERTAIN DOOM.

BUT HE DOES NOT DIE.

"PAIN IS A CONDITION OF THE **MIND**," ACCORDING TO MASTER C'HAAJ, "IT CAN BE OVERCOME BY **CONCENTRATION**, IF NEED BE.

"FIX YOUR EYE ON YOUR **OPPONENT**, YOUR MIND ON YOUR STRATEGY, YOUR HEARING ON YOUR OWN **HEARTBEAT**.

"STRIVE FOR THE MOMENT OF **TOTAL AWARENESS**...

"...AND YOU SHALL ACCOMPLISH WHAT LESSER MEN WOULD TERM **MIRACLES**."

NO!

A **FLUKE**--THAT'S WHAT IT IS! MY FOUR LIEUTENANTS--THE NUNCHAKU--

--**BEGINNER'S LUCK**, NOTHING MORE!

WELL, YOUR GOOD FORTUNE HAS JUST COME TO AN **END**, SHORTY!

DIE!!

NO,

TEETH CLENCHED, EYES BULGING, FACE RUBICUND WITH FURY, MACHO MAKES A FINAL, HATE-BLINDED CHARGE.

YES! YES! DIE WHEN I TELL YOU TO DIE!

I'LL MAKE YOU DIE! I'LL SHRED YOUR SKIN WITH MY NAILS! I'LL CHEW YOU INTO LITTLE PIECES!

I'LL TEAR YOU APA--A-AAAAGH!

FROM THE INSTANT HE LEAVES THE ROOF, HE IS CLUTCHING FURIOUSLY,

FORTUNATELY, HE HAS PLACED SOMETHING THERE IN THE EMPTY AIR TO GRAB.

UNFORTUNATELY, HIS SLICK, SWEATY PALMS AND FINGERS CANNOT MAINTAIN THEIR HOLD.

AND HE FALLS, STILL SCREAMING CURSES AT THE WOMAN AND THE DUCK, STILL PROTESTING FATE'S UNFAIRNESS--

--THAT HE, A MAN'S MAN, A FIGHTER, A STREET WARRIOR WHO NEVER LET ANYONE PUSH HIM AROUND, SHOULD BE SQUASHED LIKE AN INSECT ON THE PAVEMENT 42 STORIES BELOW--

--BY A DWARF WITH NO STRENGTH, NO RAW MUSCLE--ONLY A LITTLE TECHNIQUE.

DON'T SUFFER ANY SELF-RECRIMINATION. MACHO GOT WHAT HE DESERVED. THE KID... DIDN'T MAKE IT.

FUNNY... IT DOESN'T MAKE ME FEEL ANY BETTER, DEATH IS DEATH. MACHO DESERVED WORSE, REALLY...

AN' HE GOT IT, SEE, BEV--HE DIED A CATERPILLAR. THE KID DIED A BUTTER-FLY...!

NEXT: HOWARD FACES THE SOMNAMBULENT MENACE OF: THE SIXTH SLEEPER!

STILL ONLY 25¢

MARVEL COMICS GROUP™

4 JULY

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TRAPPED IN A WORLD HE NEVER MADE!

HOWARD THE DUCK™

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

PANIC GRIPS THE HEART OF A FEARFUL CITY...

WHEN THE SLEEPER WAKES!

From the time of his hatching, he was...different. A potentially brilliant scholar who dreaded the structured environment of school, he educated himself in the streets, taking whatever work was available, formulating his philosophy of self from what he learned of the world about him. And then the Cosmic Axis shifted...and that world *changed.* Suddenly, he was stranded in a universe he could not fathom. Without warning, he became a strange fowl in an even stranger land.

Stan Lee PRESENTS: HOWARD THE DUCK!™

JV318

WRITTEN BY STEVE GERBER * ILLUSTRATED BY GENE COLAN * S. LEIALOHA INKER * A. KAWECKI, LETTERER MICHELE W., COLORIST * MARV WOLFMAN EDITOR

THE SLEEP OF THE JUST!

HOWARD... I THINK THE *CEILING* IS CAVING IN.

YEAH... AN' MY *MIND* WENT WITH IT.

KRATOSH

I CAN'T HANDLE *HEGEL* AND FALLING *PLASTER* BOTH AT ONCE.

MHM... WHAT DO YOU SUPPOSE *CAUSED--?*

WHO'S GOTTA *SUP-POSE?* DON'T TELL ME YOU SLEPT *THRU* THAT RACKET FROM *UPSTAIRS?!*

OUR FRIENDLY NEIGHBOR'S BEEN *POUNDIN'* ON THAT SAME SPOT FOR HALF AN HOUR!

AN' OFFHAND, I'D SAY HE'S NOT ABOUT TA *LET UP.*

THUMP

DUCKY... YOU'RE GETTING *EXCITED.*

REMEMBER WHAT THE *VET* SAID. YOU'RE TO TAKE IT *EASY* 'TIL YOUR *WOUND** HEALS. I'LL GO--

RIGHT. *RELAX*-- WHILE THE *HOUSE* COMES DOWN AROUND MY *BEAK!*

THAT'S NOT MY *STYLE,* BEV.

HOWARD--*WAIT!*

*SUSTAINED IN *HTD #3* --MARV.

NO DICE, TOOTS--I'VE WAITED LONG *ENOUGH!* ANOTHER CALM, COOL, SELF-CONTROLLED *SECOND*--AN' I'LL *FLAKE OUT!*

NEVER REALIZED ...HOW *WIRED* I GET IF I DON'T KEEP *MOVIN'!*

UPSTAIRS...

AWRIGHT, AWRIGHT-- PULL YER *EYEBALLS* BACK IN YER HEADS AN' YER HEADS BACK IN YER *DOORS.*

I'LL HANDLE OUR HUMAN *JACKHAMMER.*

BUT--YOU'RE-- A *DUCK!!*

YEP--AN' UNLESS YOU FIGGER A *PRUNE* IS BETTER SUITED TO THE JOB--STAY OUTTA MY *WAY!*

AWRIGHT, YA BLASTED BATTERING RAM-- *OPEN UP!* FOOT-STOMPIN' TIME IS *OVER!* IT'S AFTER MIDNIGHT!

THUMP THUMP

HOWARD--?

TRY THE *DOOR.*

I'VE *MET* THE GUY WHO LIVES HERE. I'D BET HE LEAVES IT--

--UNLOCKED! RIGHT AS RAIN, TOOTS!

STAY BEHIND ME, NOW--THIS NUT COULD BE *DANGEROUS!*

GEE, I DON'T *THINK* SO, DUCKY, CHECK OUT HIS *EYES.* THEY'RE *SHUT.*

SO WHAT? IF *MY* PLACE WERE THIS CRUMMY-LOOKING, I'D--

WAIT--CRIPES, YOU MEAN--HE'S *ASLEEP?!*

PRECISELY--AND STRIKING OUT IN VAIN AGAINST SOME NAMELESS, INVISIBLE *NIGHT TERROR.*

MOMENTARILY, THE MACABRE SIGHT HOLDS HOWARD AND BEV *TRANSFIXED.*

BUT ONLY MOMENTARILY.

C'MON, SLEEPING BEAUTY--*WAKE UP!* THIS MAY BE A PEACEFUL SNOOZE FOR *YOU,* BUT--!

TWAP

THE STINGING **SLAP** *OF HOWARD'S WEBBED FOOT* **DOES** *WRENCH THE YOUNG MAN'S* **EYE-LIDS** *OPEN...*

...BUT HIS OUTLOOK REMAINS SOMEWHAT DISTORTED BY SLEEP.

THE DUCK APPEARS A CRIMSON-EYED, CARNIVOROUS MONSTROSITY... BEVERLY SWITZLER, A SARDONIC, SADISTIC SORCERESS WHOM THE DUCK-DEMON SERVES.

JUST TO GET HIM TO--

WAKE UP!!

THEY INTEND TO HARM HIM... EVEN SLASH HIM TO RIBBONS IF NECESSARY... AND WHY?

AAAGH!

HADDA POP YA ONE, PAL--YOU WERE FLAKIN' OUT. DIDN'T MEAN TO HURT YOU THAT BAD...!

YOU DIDN'T... I'M SORRY... I THOUGHT... BUT I GUESS... I'M NOT BLEEDING, AM I?

NOPE. IT WAS ALL A DREAM.

NIGHTMARE, YOU MEAN.

REALLY WEIRD, HUH? YOU HAVE THIS PROBLEM A LOT?

ONLY WHEN I SLEEP--THAT IS, MOST OF MY LIFE.

LORD, I SOUND DEPRESSING.

YEAH, WELL--THAT'S OKAY.

WHAT'S AN ARTIST WITHOUT A TEMPERAMENT?

UH-UH. THE QUESTION IS: "WHAT'S A TEMPERAMENT WITHOUT AN ARTIST?"

ANSWER: ME--PAUL SAME--SPECIALIST IN UNFINISHED WORKS.

WANNA TALK ABOUT IT--OR SHOULD WE JUST BUZZ OFF?

OBOY. HERE IT *COMES*, FOLKS--THE TALE OF WOE YOU'VE ALL BEEN *WAITING* FOR!

OH, HOWARD-- *SHUSH!*

DON'T LET MY FEATHERED FRIEND *INHIBIT* YOU, PAUL, JUST POUR OUT YOUR HEART. I'LL PUT ON SOME *COFFEE*.

YOU'RE *SURE* YOU WANT TO LISTEN TO THIS?

I MEAN-- IT *GOES* BACK TO WHEN I WAS JUST A *KID*.

"*SEE*, I WAS SORT OF A MINOR-LEAGUE *PRODIGY*. I COULD *READ* AT AGE *THREE*. I WAS MY PARENTS' PRIDE AND JOY--THE STAR ATTRACTION AT ALL THEIR PARTIES.

"THEY EXPECTED GREAT THINGS FROM ME IN *SCHOOL*. THEY MIGHT'VE *GOTTEN* 'EM, TOO--

NO, PAUL-- IT'S *HAMMERING* TIME, NOT PAINTING TIME. YOU HAVE TO JOIN THE *OTHER* CHILDREN--

--OR THEY WON'T *LIKE* YOU.

"--IF I HADN'T BEEN SO *BORED* WITH WHAT THEY WERE TEACHING AND THE DULL, DRONING WAY THEY *TAUGHT* IT. AS IT WAS, I *DAYDREAMED* A-LOT.

"SO IT WENT ON MY RECORD THAT I WAS AN *UNDERACHIEVER*, A PROBLEM LEARNER WITH NO ATTENTION SPAN.

THWACK

"AND THE *KIDS* NICK-NAMED ME '*SLEEPY*.'

"REAL *CREATIVE* TYPES, THOSE LITTLE RASCALS.

"ANYWAY, EVERY **REPORT CARD** BECAME AN OCCASION TO READ ME THE RIOT ACT.

"THE TWO WORDS THAT MOST REMIND ME OF MY CHILD-HOOD ARE '**OR**' AND '**ELSE.**'

MMM...FOR ME, IT'S "WHEN YOU'RE **OLD** ENOUGH."

THAT'S WHEN I WAS SUPPOSED TO LEARN ABOUT **ANYTHING** THAT STRUCK ME AS **INTERESTING.**

EVERY TIME I GOT A REPORT CARD, I **LOST** A PRIVILEGE.

BY FOURTH GRADE, I HAD TO RAISE MY HAND TO GO TO THE JOHN--AT **HOME!**

YEAH... I HAD PROBLEMS WITH SCHOOL, TOO.

I DON'T **WONDER...** IF YOU'VE ALWAYS DRESSED LIKE **THAT!**

WAUUGH!

LISTEN, BUSTER-- I DIDN'T STICK AROUND HERE TO BE **INSULTED!**

BESIDES--THESE THREADS HAPPEN TO BE THE **HEIGHT** OF ELEGANCE! BEV PICKED 'EM OUT **HERSELF**--

--AN' SHE KNOWS **CLASS,** SEE?

SURE. NOTHING PERSONAL. I CAN **SEE** HOW SOME WOMEN COULD GET OFF ON A TOUGH LITTLE GUY--

--EVEN IN A **DUCK SUIT!** DIFFERENT STROKES AND ALL THAT.

UH, PAUL... THAT'S **NOT** A COSTUME. HE'S FOR **REAL.** HIS DUCKNESS IS **INBORN.**

OKAY, OKAY--IF THAT'S HOW YOU WANT TO **PLAY** IT, I DON'T CARE.

I'LL SWALLOW **YOUR** STORY IF YOU'LL BELIEVE **MINE.**

DEAL! JUST GET ON WITH IT, HUH?

"IF YOU **INSIST:**

"**PHASE TWO** HIT WHEN I WAS **TEN** OR SO, BORED, ANGRY, FRUSTRATED, BUT BASICALLY **PASSIVE** BY NATURE--

BEEP BEEP

"I BEGAN **DOZING** OFF WHENEVER THE PRESSURES STARTED TO BUILD--WHENEVER AND **WHEREVER.**

"IT WAS THE ONLY **SAFETY VALVE** I HAD--BUT IT LED TO SOME PRETTY STRANGE SCENES.

"**NOTHING** COULD ROUSE ME FROM THAT STATE, NOT THE SCREAMING DIPS AND DIVES OF A **ROLLER COASTER**--

"--NOT EVEN THE THRILL OF **YOUNG LOVE.**

"I **SLEPT** THROUGH MY **FIRST KISS.**

"MEANWHILE, OF COURSE, THERE WAS ALL THIS **HOSTILITY** SWELLING LIKE A **TUMOR** INSIDE ME, AND AS I SPENT MORE AND MORE OF MY LIFE **ASLEEP**--

"--IT BEGAN TO SURFACE IN VIOLENT **DREAMS.** I SAW MYSELF AS A RAMPAGING **COLOSSUS.**

"I'D TRAMPLE WHOLE **CITIES**--CRUSH ANYTHING, **ANYONE** THAT STOOD IN MY WAY OR TRIED TO JACK ME AROUND."

IT GETS SO BAD I CAN'T *TELL* ANYMORE WHEN I'M AWAKE OR ASLEEP. AND MY *FURY* AT THE WORLD KEEPS *GROWING!*

WALKING DOWN THE STREET... I GET THE URGE TO *PUNCH OUT* TOTAL STRANGERS!

I HOPE YOU DON'T EXPECT US TO *SYMPATHIZE!* DIDN'T YOU EVER *FIGHT BACK* AT--?

OH, *NO!* I'VE NEVER BEEN ABLE TO HURT *ANYONE!*

IF SOMEONE STANDS ON MY TOE, I'D RATHER *WAIT* FOR THEM TO *MOVE* THAN RISK *OFFENDING* THEM BY ASKING...!

'COURSE--THAT DOESN'T *STOP* YA FROM BANGIN' IN *CEILINGS* AT THREE A.M.!

HECK, YOU GOT THE PERFECT *EXCUSE* FOR ANY ACTION... YOU DID IT IN YOUR *SLEEP!*

SLAM

OKAY. WHAT *IS* THIS? I'VE HEARD SLIMIER STORIES THAN *THAT!*

WHY'D I FLAKE OUT? WHAT *GETS* TO ME ABOUT THAT GUY?

PAUL, I'M *SORRY* ABOUT HOWARD'S TEMPER. HE--

LISTEN, GET SOME REST NOW, HUH? WE CAN TALK SOME MORE IN THE *MORNING* IF YOU WANT.

THE PERFECT...YES... IN THE MORNING... SURE, IN THE MORNING...

...BUT UNDER THE COVER OF DARKNESS...YES ...THE PERFECT... GOODNIGHT, BEV.

DOWNSTAIRS...

CAME DOWN A LITTLE *HARD* ON THE GUY, DON'TCHA THINK?

NAH! HE PROBABLY NEVER EVEN *FELT* IT. HIS HEAD'S OUT TO *LUNCH*, TOOTS-- COULDN'T YOU TELL?

HE'S JUST A WAD OF *SELF-PITY.*

CLICK

SO LET HIM SLEEPWALK THROUGH LIFE! WHO *CARES?!*

I JUST WANNA GET SOME SHUT-EYE FOR *MYSELF!*

I MEAN... IT'S NOT LIKE IT'S *MY* PROBLEM. THESE HAIRLESS APES MANUFACTURE *NEUROSES* FOR THEMSELVES US *DUCKS* NEVER DREAMED OF!

NEVER "DREAMED" OF. HEH. FUNNY. HEH-HEH.

I DON'T *BLAME* SAME FOR NODDIN' OUT. IF *I* HADDA PLAY BY THIS WORLD'S NUTTY RULES...WHERE THEY *PENALIZE* YA FOR BEING CLEVER AN' *REWARD* MEDIOCRITY...

...AND THEN *GLAMORIZE* THE *OUTLAW*, 'CAUSE HE MAKES IT ON HIS OWN TERMS, EVEN IF THEY'RE STUPID AND *DESTRUCTIVE*...

I CAN'T SLEEP.

CLICK

I GOTTA GET OUT AN' DO SOME *THINKING.* I SHOULD'A KNOWN!

EVERY TIME I LET MY MIND *SLIP* LIKE THAT...!

I START OFF TRYIN' TO *MINIMIZE* ONE PUNK'S PROBLEM AND WIND UP DISSECTING A WHOLE *SOCIAL STRUCTURE!*

:WAUGGH:

ELSEWHERE...

BUT, I SWEAR... I'VE ONLY ENOUGH FOR CAR-FARE AND A *HAMBURGER!*

SO YOU'RE *POOR!* YOU'LL BE POOR AN' *DEAD* IF YA DON'T LEMME CHECK THAT PURSE FOR *MYSELF*, GRAND-MA!

YA GOT *TEN SECONDS!*

10--9--8--7--

--SICK! SICK, SICK, SICK!

HUH--?

OVER THE *WALL,* OUT OF THE *NIGHT,* TO ANSWER THE CALL OF THIS WOMAN IN FRIGHT--

--COMES *WINKY-MAN,* BOLD AND DARING AND FREE, TO PUT THE *KIBOSH* ON THIS DUMB ROBBERY!

I DON'T BELIEVE I'M SEEIN' THIS...!

ARE YOU FOR *REAL?!* I HEARD O' HEROES IN LONG *UNDERWEAR* --BUT A *NIGHT-GOWN?!*

AN WHAT'S *THAT* FOR? YA GONNA *DRIP WAX* ON ME?

HAW! LOOK, MAN--IF YOU'RE *SMART,* YOU'LL GO BACK TO *BED* AN' FORGET YA EVER--

DERIDE ME AND MOCK ME AND *SCOFF* IF YOU WILL! YOU'LL JUST HAVE TO SWALLOW YOUR OWN BITTER *PILL!*

FOR WHILE YOUR BIG MOUTH HAS BEEN TAUNTIN' AND FOAMIN', YOU'VE NEGLECTED TO NOTICE MY CANDLE IS *ROMAN!*

FAREWELL-- *SUCKER!*

MEANWHILE, JUST AROUND THE CORNER, THE FOWL SEEKS DISTRACTION IN THE HAZY, VIBRATING ATMOSPHERE OF JOE'S BAR.

ME, I FIGGER LIVIN'S SORTA LIKE FOOTBALL... OR SQUASH, KNOW WHAT I MEAN?

SHTRATEGY... FAS' MOVES... BEER COMMERCIALS..

AAAH...GO EAT A BEEF JERKY!

BETTER YET... LET'S CHANGE THE SUBJECT.

YEAH... LIVIN'S A DRAG...LIKE FOOTBALL, LET'SH TALK ABOUT YOU.

YOU RILLY A DUCK? LEMME HEAR YA QUACK!

HE-E-EY! HE'S MY BUDDY! YOU LET 'IM ALONE!

DON' TELL ME WHADDA DO! I WANT 'IM TA QUACK--OR I'LL BASH YER HEAD IN!

HEY!!

HEY, WHAD?

HEY, YOU!

GUYS... YOU'RE GASSIN' ME...!

SOCK

DON' WORRY, PAL--I WON' LET IM' GET AWAY WI' DAT!

WAAUUK

ALCOHOL, OF COURSE, IS HIGHLY FLAMMABLE. SO WHEN TEMPERS IGNITE IN A JOINT LIKE JOE'S...

IT TAKES ONLY MOMENTS FOR THE FLAME TO LEAP FROM PATRON TO PATRON UNTIL THE SPARK HAS BECOME A FOREST FIRE.

BUT THE RAGING FIRE FREEZES AT THE SUDDEN CRY OF:

KNOCK IT OFF, YOU DRUNKEN BUMS!

SOMETHING WINKY THIS WAY COMES!

YOU, TOO, MADAM--IT'D MAKE ME EDGY FOR THAT MAN'S FACE TO FEEL YOUR WEDGIE!

HEAR ME NOW, AND HEAR ME WELL!

MY ANGER'S ONLY BEGUN TO SWELL!

OH, NO...!

YOU'VE HELPED MAKE MY WORLD THE MESS IT IS--YOU AND YOUR DRINKS THAT SPARKLE AND FIZZ!

I'LL SEE EVERY ONE OF YOU PUT IN TRACTION!

AND I WON'T BE RESPONSIBLE FOR MY ACTION!

PAUL... THEY'RE GETTIN' UGLY.

JOE'S BAR

S'POZE WE SPLIT --TO A NICE, SAFE, DARK ALLEY!

YOU'RE ASLEEP, AREN'T YOU, PAUL?

C'MON, YA DOPE--SNAP OUT OF IT! YOU COULD'A BEEN KILLED!

WHA?--WHERE AM I--?

OH, *SWELL!* HE WAKES UP, AN' HIS MEMORY *FIZZLES!* HE DOESN'T *KNOW* HE COULD'A GOT *SNUFFED!*

WHY IS IT I FORESEE... *COMPLICATIONS?*

SEVERAL DAYS LATER...

YOU SAY YA SCULPTED IT FROM *MEMORY?*

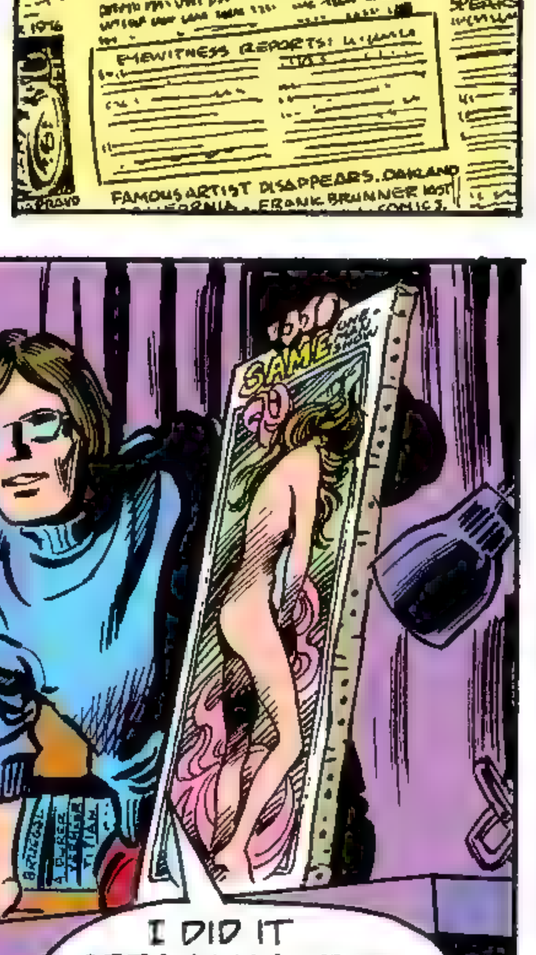
WELL... AND *IMAGINA-TION.*

IT'S *AMAZING!* YOU'VE BEEN SO *PRODUCTIVE* LATELY! I JUST WISH *I* COULD FANTASIZE MY BODY INTO SUCH GOOD SHAPE!

WEEKS PASS.

PAUL'S PRODUCTIVITY INCREASES STEADILY... AS WINKY-MAN'S NIGHT-TIME EXPLOITS GROW EVER MORE OUTRAGEOUS.

SHATTERING SYMBOLS OF RIGIDITY AND CON-FORMITY, PUNCTURING POMPOSITY AND PRETENSE, HE IS ELEVATED TO LEGEND STATUS.



HIS PLACE IS *SPOTLESS,* HIS WORK UNDER CONTROL...

AN' HE STILL DOESN'T KNOW IT'S 'CAUSE *WINKY'S* WORKING OUT ALL HIS *HOSTILITIES* IN HIS SLEEP!

HOW LONG BEFORE HE WANTS A PIECE OF PAUL'S *WAKING* ACTION, TOO--?

NEATO!

I DID IT SPECIALLY--FOR MY *ONE-MAN SHOW* NEXT WEEK!

NEXT WEEK:

THE GUY WITH THE BEARD IS *XAVIER COUTURE*--THE ART CRITIC.

VERY INFLUENTIAL. IF HE'S IMPRESSED, I'VE LAUNCHED MYSELF A *CAREER.*

IF *NOT*... WELL, I CAN STILL BE A PAINTER... AT *EARL SCHEIB'S.*

JUNK. PURE *JUNK.*

JUNGLE ROT ON CANVAS.

NOTE THE ABSENCE OF *AUTHORITY* IN THE BRUSH STROKE. OUR YOUNG GENIUS HAS SPREAD HIMSELF TOO *THIN,* I'D SAY. ;HEH HEH;

ARE YOU GONNA LET THAT CREEP *GET AWAY* WITH THAT?!

I... DON'T KNOW...!

YEESH--YOU'RE GOING *PALE!* C'MON OVER TO THE *COUCH!*

FEEL... *DROWSY...* EYES BLURRING...

UH-OH.

SEE IF THERE'S A *DOCTOR* IN THE HOUSE, TOOTS-- AND *HURRY!*

BETTER ASK AROUND FOR A *STRAITJACKET,* TOO.

"JUNK," HE SAID...!

IT'S-- *NOT*-- *JUNK!!*

THUNK

OUTTA MY WAY! I'LL SHOW HIM! HE'LL *EAT* THOSE WORDS! I'LL STUFF 'EM DOWN HIS THROAT A SYLLABLE AT A TIME!!

MOMENTS LATER, AFTER A QUICK TRIP TO THE PARKING LOT...

...EXCEEDED ONLY BY THE BANALITY OF THE *SUBJECT.* THE FEMALE BODY IS *PASSÉ.*

ONLY THROUGH REINTERPRETATION IN LESS *CONCRETE* TERMS--

I'VE HEARD QUITE ENOUGH OF YOUR CRITIC'S LAMENT! IT'S YOUR *HEAD,* NOT HER BODY, THAT'S MADE OF *CEMENT!*

WHERE'D HE GO-- WHA' HOPPEN?--

YOU MAY THINK YOUR COMMENTS ARE WITTY AND *WRY*--

--BUT THEY'RE *VAIN* AND THEY'RE *SILLY* AND YOU'RE GONNA *DIE!*

OH, NO YA DON'T! YOU'RE AN ARTIST--NOT A *HIT MAN!*

YA GOTTA PLAY THE *PART*-- ACT *SENSITIVE!* CAN'T RUN AROUND *SKAGGIN'* PEOPLE! *GIMME* THAT ROD--

BLAM!

--BEFORE IT GOES OFF.

MY GOD! THE MAN WHO SAVED COUTURE'S LIFE--IS A *DUCK!*

WHOOSH!

LISTEN... I SEEM TO HAVE HIT THE WRONG *SWITCH* ON THIS THING.

ASK THE TURKEY IN *NIGHTSHIRT* HOW TO TURN IT--

WHACK

WAAUGH!

THE FLAILING FOWL'S PLEA GOES *UNHEARD* AMID THE CONFUSION, BUT FORTUITOUS *FATE*--IN THE FORM OF A HEAT-SENSITIVE *SPRINKLER SYSTEM*--SAVES THE DAY.

THE FIERY CANDLE ELICITS A *DOWNPOUR*--AND THE COLD WATER NOT ONLY DOWNS THE DUCK, BUT *DRENCHES* PAUL AWAKE!

OKAY, CHUM--THIS IS THE MOMENT OF *TRUTH!* BE YOURSELF! TELL THAT BUM OFF!

HUH--?

OH--*YEAH!*

COOL YOUR *HEELS,* FUZZY! DON'T RUN OFF YET! I--

QUICK--WHAT DO I SAY?

HE'S A *PHONY!*

YOU'RE A *PHONY!* YOU WOULDN'T KNOW *ART* IF IT CAME UP AND BIT THE *PSORIASIS* OFF YOUR *ELBOW!*

I'LL HAVE YOU KNOW, MR. SAME, THAT I AM AN *AUTHORITY!*

PHOOEY! YOU'RE NO AUTHORITY-- YOU'RE JUST A BALD GUY!

HA! THE ART WORLD'S BEEN WAITING FOR YEARS FOR SOMEONE TO POP THAT POMPOUS BAG OF WIND!

GIVE THAT MAN A HAND! GIVE HIM A MEDAL!

HIP HIP HOORAY

HIP HIP

HM.

THE FOLKS ENJOYED OUR LITTLE EXHIBITION OF LIFE-AS-ART, WOULDN'T YOU SAY, PAUL?

A PROFOUND STATEMENT ON MAN'S INCLINATION TO ARTIFICIALITY...!

NUTS! CO-OPTED AGAIN! NEXT, HE'LL TAKE CREDIT FOR PAINTING THE PICTURES!

IT'S NOT IMPORTANT, THE PEOPLE SAW WHAT HAPPENED, THEY KNOW.

THEY DON'T KNOW!

THEY KNOW!

THEY DON'T!

WELL... PAUL KNOWS.

LATER...

LOOK AT HIM-- SLEEPING LIKE A BABY. I THINK YOU CHANGED HIS DESTINY TODAY.

AAH--HE'S GOT A LONG WAY TA GO. COUTURE WAS A CINCH.

WHAT IF IT'D BEEN A WOMAN CRITIC? THE CROWD WON'T CHEER IF YA YANK OFF A BALD LADY'S WIG!

NEXT TIRED, BROKE, AND WEB-FOOTED!

HOWARD THE DUCK

MARVEL COMICS GROUP

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

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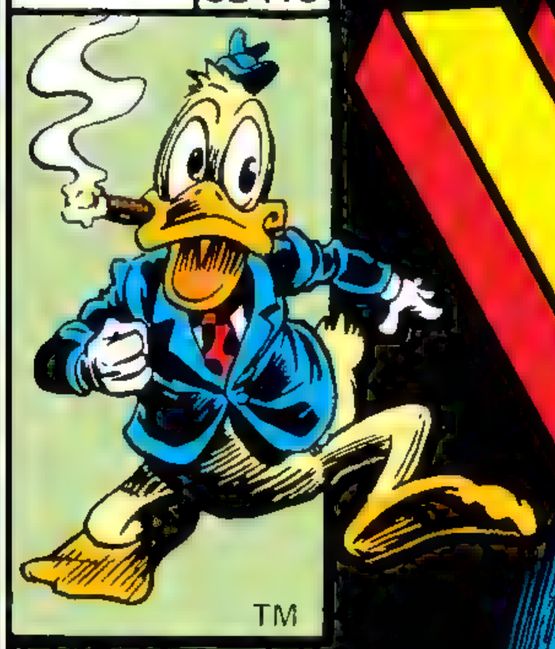
5 SEPT 02415

TRAPPED IN A WORLD HE NEVER MADE!

HOWARD THE DUCK™

WAAAUGH! IT'S THE FEATHERED FURY VERSUS THE MAN-MOUNTAIN-- KLOUT!

ARENA OF NO RETURN



From the time of his hatching, he was...different. A potentially brilliant scholar who dreaded the structured environment of school, he educated himself in the streets, taking whatever work was available, formulating his philosophy of self from what he learned of the world about him. And then the Cosmic Axis shifted...and that world *changed.* Suddenly, he was stranded in a universe he could not fathom. Without warning, he became a strange fowl in an even stranger land.

Stan Lee PRESENTS: HOWARD THE DUCK!™

STEVE GERBER AVARICIOUS WRITER | **GENE COLAN** PENURIOUS PENCILLER | **STEVE LEIALOHA** INSATIABLE INKER | **ARCHIE GOODWIN** TIGHTFISTED EDITOR

WELL, THE BEST THINGS IN LIFE ARE FREE--BUT YOU CAN GIVE 'EM TO THE BIRDS AN' BEES--

I WANT MO-O-ONEY!

EUREKA!! I FOUND MY STASH!!

LOVE

LOOK, HOWARD! HERE IT IS--A WHOLE *QUARTER*--A SHINY NEW BICENTENNIAL *QUARTER*--OURS, ALL *OURS*!!

AND I ONLY HAD TO RANSACK *HALF* THE APARTMENT TO TURN IT UP!

POSTERS OF MAXFIELD PARRISH

IRV WATANABE LETTERER
MICHELE WOLFMAN COLORIST

JV354

LET'S SEE...

WITH THE CHANGE WE FOUND IN DRAWERS...**YEP!** JUST ENOUGH FOR A CANDY BAR APIECE FOR **DINNER!**

;WAAUGH; $108 IN UNPAID BILLS--THE RENT DUE--AND WE'VE GOT FIFTY CENTS--**FIFTY MEASLY CENTS!**

HOW COULD YOU **GET** YOURSELF INTO A FISCAL FIASCO LIKE THIS?!

GEE, IT'S **EASY** TO LET ALL THOSE BILLS LANGUISH ON THE SHELF--WHEN YOU DON'T HAVE THE BREAD TO **PAY** 'EM.

WHAT DID YOU THINK--I WAS **INDEPENDENTLY WEALTHY?**

MORE OR LESS... **YEAH.**

I MEAN--YA HAVEN'T **WORKED** A DAY SINCE I'VE **KNOWN** YA.

I TOLD YOU--WHEN I NEED MONEY, I POSE FOR A **LIFE-DRAWING** CLASS.

IT'S A STANDING OFFER--THERE'S ALWAYS WORK. I'LL CALL THE SCHOOL TOMORROW.

YEAH. SWELL--MEANTIME, WE FEAST BY CANDLELIGHT ON TWO **SNICKERS!**

I'LL BE BACK, BEV.

I'M HEADIN' FOR THE **DRUGSTORE** TA--

HOWARD--**WAIT!** LET'S GET **RICH!**

COME AGAIN?

LET'S MAKE A MILLION DOLLARS AND GO OFF WHERE NOBODY CAN FIND US AND ***RULE THE WORLD!***

ON THE $2.10 AN HOUR YOU EARN AS A ***MODEL?***

SURE, BEV.

JEEZ, HOWARD, YOU'RE ALWAYS SO ***REALISTIC!***

HAVEN'T YOU EVER HAD A ***FANTASY?***

UH-HUH. I GET 'EM A ***LOT--***

--'SPECIALLY WHEN I'M ***HUNGRY!***

DRU

MAGAZINES

I GET A LITTLE ***SHORT-TEMPERED*** ON AN EMPTY STOMACH, TOO.

MAYBE I'LL TAKE MY TIME--NOSE AROUND THE AISLES FOR SOME ***EXCITEMENT.***

WHO KNOWS? MIGHT BE A BRAND O' ***LAXATIVE*** TA LOOK AT--OR A SPECIAL ON ***DEODORANT*** THAT'D TUG AT YER HEART--OR--

I'M ***TELLIN'*** YA, RUDY--IT'S A ***DUCK!***

QUACKIE DUCK

WAITAMINIT--WHAT IN THE NAME O' LITERATURE IS ***THIS?!***

HIS CURIOSITY PIQUED, HOWARD LEAFS THROUGH THE STRANGE MAGAZINE, PAUSING HERE AND THERE TO READ...!

QUACKIE DUCK

BETCHA CAN'T CATCH ME! BETCHA! BETCHA!

in...THE BEAR FACTS

OH, ***YEAH?*** I'LL SHOW ***YOU!***

WRONG AGAIN --***DUMMY!*** DIE, BEAR!

OOPS.

WAAAUGH

OF ALL THE BIASED, STEREOTYPIC *TRASH!*

WHAM

THIS IS AN UNFAIR REPRESENTATION OF *DUCKS!* IT MAKES US OUT AS *SADISTS*--PICKING ON THE POOR, STUPID *BEARS!*

UH-HUH...WELL, NOW THAT YOU'VE *MANGLED* THAT FUNNY-BOOK, YOU'VE *BOUGHT* IT, PAL.

THIRTY CENTS!

THIRTY--?!

THAT'S HIGHWAY *ROBBERY!* I REMEMBER WHEN A *DIME*--

AAAH-- *SKIP* IT! JUST GIMME A *SNICKERS*, TOO, HUH?

CERTAINLY, SIR.

DO COME SEE US AGAIN.

OVER MY DEAD *BODY!* PATRONIZE A PLACE THAT SELLS REACTIONARY PROPAGANDA TO *KIDS?!*

BUY ONE GET ONE FREE

NO, *THANKS!* I'LL TAKE MY BUSINESS *ELSEWHERE!*

SHORTLY...

WHAT *TOOK* SO LONG? AND WHERE'S OUR *CANDY?*

WE'RE DOWN TA *ONE BAR.* I SQUANDERED THIRTY CENTS ON MY *PRINCIPLES!*

A *COMIC BOOK?* I DON'T GET IT!

DON'T JUST LOOK AT THE PICTURES! *READ!* IT'S A WHOLE PAMPHLET FULL O' *FOWL ASPERSIONS!*

IF THERE'S ONE *GOOD* WORD ABOUT DUCKS IN THERE, *SHOW* ME!

AND NOW IT'S ***LISTENER'S LINE*** ON ***WDUM*** --THE NUMBER TO CALL, 754-034--

ON THE ***OTHER*** HAND...

HOWARD, WHAT--?

QUACKIE DUCK

IF YOU HAIRLESS APES GET SUCH A ***CHARGE*** OUTTA TALKIN' FOWL--

--ALL I GOTTA DO TO MAKE US A FORTUNE IS ***SELL OUT***-- EXPLOIT MYSELF!

HUH? WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

BEEP BOO BOP

JUST LEND AN ***EAR***, TOOTS --YOU'LL FIND OUT.

GOT A ***LIVE*** ONE, BOSS!

SOME NUT WHO SAYS ***COMIC BOOKS*** ARE QUOTE "PROMULGATING RACIST MYTHS AND PERPETUATING PREJUDICE".

GREAT!

ABOUT TIME WE GOT SOMETHING ***CONTROVERSIAL!***

THAT'S RIGHT, BUDDY--***DUCKS!*** SLANTED, ONE-SIDED, DEFAMATORY PORTRAYALS OF ***DUCKS!***

AND I ***KNOW***, 'CAUSE I ***AM*** ONE!

WHADDAYA MEAN, "ONE ***WHAT***"? ONE TALKING ***DUCK***, YA--

YEEOWAAGH

CLACK

I DON'T THINK HE BELIEVED ME.

SORRY ABOUT THAT ONE, FOLKS. FOR SOME MISGUIDED SOULS, FREEDOM OF SPEECH IS A LICENSE TO...

YA FIGGER I CAME ON TOO *SHRILL*, OR WHAT?

NAH.

"BUT MAYBE YOU SHOULD TRY A MORE *VISUAL* MEDIUM."

NEXT DAY...

WHAP-TV

CHANNEL 81

;AHEM; *HI*, THERE! I--

;AHEM;

;AHEM;

SO THIS IS *SHOW-BIZ.*

HEADS *UP*, TOOTS! A *STAR'S* JUST ENTERED THE PREMISES, SEE?!

WHAM

JUNE 15 1976

dcasting Co.
ert Ave
and, Ohio

letter

OH. THE NEW DUCK.

STUDIO "B"--THAT WAY. AND YOU BETTER GET A *MOVE* ON.

NNEL 81

HUH? OH! SURE, DOLL.

SOME VISUAL MEDIUM! THEY DON'T EVEN LOOK ATCHA WHEN THEY *TALK* TO YA!

BUT WHAT THEY HECK--IF THEY WERE *EXPECTIN'* ME--!

MAY AS W--

;WEEAUGHPHF;

CRIPES, IT'S ABOUT *TIME!* OVER *HERE!*

HERE--GET ON THE CHALKMARK!

AND JUST STAND STOCK *STILL* 'TIL WE TELL YOU TO MOVE! *GOT* THAT?!

OH, AND GIMME THAT *STOGIE!*

WHAT'RE YOU-- TRYIN' TO *CORRUPT* THESE KIDS? GONZO'S GOT AN *IMAGE* TO PROTECT!

GONZO...?

OKAY--PLACES! FIVE SECONDS TO AIR!

4--
3--
2--

JUST STAND HERE, HUH?

"AND NOW, KIDS, GET READY FOR--GONZO!"

GONZO THE CLOWN KIDDIE KARTOON KORNER

"FEATURING YOUR FAVORITE FEATHER-BRAIN--DOPEY DUCK!"

WHO...?

"POOR DOPEY, HUH, KIDS? ALWAYS GETTING HIT WITH THOSE PIES! ISN'T HE FUNNY?"

"NOT HALF AS FUNNY AS YOU'RE GONNA BE WITHOUT TEETH, YA TURKEY!!"

SPLAT

"HEY--WHA'--AAAGH!--

PLEASE STAND BY KIDS

"HALP! THIS DWARF'S TRYING TO KILL ME!"

YAY! ATTA WAY, DOPEY! BEAT THE LIVING SPIT OUTTA THAT MEALY-MOUTHED CLOWN!

LOOKIT! GONZO'S GOT A NOSEBLEED!

HEY, NO FAIR! WATCH OUT, DOPEY! THE GUY WITH THE BEARD'S SNEAKIN' UP ON YA!

HEE-HEE. HEE-HEE. HEE-HEE.

;HEH HEH; OKAY, DOPEY--FUN'S FUN--BUT YOU DON'T WANT TO **HURT** GONZO, DO YOU?

RRRIP

TAKE YER **PAWS** OFF ME, YA BIG GOON--!

THWIP

BABY RU

YEAH, YA BIG GOON--LET 'IM GO!

YEAH! WE WANNA SEE GONZA **GET IT!**

SPLAT

ECLAIRE CANDY

HEH HEH AW, **KIDS**--Y-YOU DON'T **MEAN** THAT--?

IF THIS'S THE STANDARD INTELLECTUAL CALIBER OF THE **ENTER-TAINMENT** YOU FEED 'EM, FUZZY--I BET THEY **DO.**

ANYWAY, I GOTTA **SPLIT.**

BUT IF I WERE **YOU,** I'D **SEIZE** THIS OPPORTUNITY TO MEET YOUR **CRITICS.** YA MIGHT **LEARN** SOMETHING.

OUTSIDE... SWELL! SO I ES-CAPED WITH MY **DIG-NITY** AND DID MY BIT IN THE CRUSADE TO IMPROVE CHILDREN'S TV...!

BIG **DEAL!**

E-Z CREDIT-APPLIA

I'M STILL FLAT **BROKE...**

... AND NOT EXACTLY **BESIEGED** WITH OFFERS OF EMPLOYMENT.

I DUNNO...I GUESS SOMETIMES YA JUST GOTTA SETTLE FOR THE **PERSONAL** SATISFACTION OF A JOB WELL DONE!

RIGHT, KIDS?

*SUDDENLY, A GRUFF WHISKEY VOICE **INTRUDES** ON THE DUCK'S REVERIE...*

HEY--AIN'T YOU THE GUY--?

YEAH. SO **WHAT?**

SO **CONGRATULATIONS,** SHORTY! LEMME SHAKE YOUR HAND! YOU'RE **MY** KINDA **MAN!**

I AM...?

I BEEN WAITIN' **TEN YEARS** TO SEE THAT SHNOOK GET WHAT'S COMIN' TO 'IM! I **HATE** THAT CLOWN! **HE** AIN'T FUNNY!

YOU'RE PROB'LY OUT OF A **JOB** NOW, HUH?

WELL, LISSEN--ANY-BODY MAKES A FOOL OUTTA **GONZO** CAN'T BE ALL BAD!

YOU GOT WORK WITH **ME** IF YOU **WANT** IT, PAL! COME ON IN!

REAL **CUSHY** POSITION I GOT IN MIND FOR YOU. YOU JUST DIAL THE **PHONE--**

--AND ASK PEOPLE **NICELY** TO KEEP UP WITH THEIR **PAYMENTS.**

OH, AND IN A **RARE INSTANCE,** IT MIGHT BE NECESSARY TO CALL ON A CUSTOMER AT HOME.

YOU KNOW HOW IT IS--SOME PEOPLE JUST HAVETA BE **REMINDED** TO BE **HONEST.** ;SIGH;

OKAY, NOW THIS IS OUR **"SLOW-PAY"** FILE.

YOU START AT THE **FRONT** AND KEEP CALLIN' 'TIL YOU GET TO THE **BACK.** SIMPLE, RIGHT?

YOU CAN START RIGHT **NOW,** GUY.

I'M GONNA WAIT ON THE SWEET YOUNG **THING** JUST STROLLED IN.

PROB'LY "JUST LOOKING"--THAT TYPE ALWAYS **IS.** SO I FIGGER I'LL "JUST LOOK" AT **HER!** WHY NOT, HUH?

OKAY, SO THE BOSS LEANS A LITTLE TO THE **SLIMEY** SIDE--YOUR BASIC SELF-MADE RETAILER.

BOO BOO BEE

SO **WHAT?** IT'S A JOB... AND IT LOOKS TO BE A **CINCH.**

HEL-LO, I'M CALLING FOR THE E-Z CREDIT APPLIANCE COMPANY, MRS. ADLER.

ACCORDING TO OUR RECORDS, YOU'RE TWO MONTHS IN **ARREARS** ON--

MRS. ADLER-- WHAT?--NO-- **HEY,** I DIDN'T--

≥ULP≤ DON'T **CRY**--!

SOMETHIN' SMELLS **FISHY** AROUND HERE.

AND **I'M** GONNA FIND OUT WHAT IT **IS!**

SHORTLY...

NOT EXACTLY ANYBODY'S IDEA OF **XANADU,** IS IT? HOPE I GOT THE RIGHT **ADDRESS.**

SOMEHOW, I CAN'T PICTURE THE FOLKS WHO LIVE IN **THIS** DUMP AS SLAVES TO **CONSPICUOUS CONSUMPTION.**

YOU'D FIGURE THEY'D HANG ONTA THEIR DOUGH FOR **FOOD**...OR HOME IMPROVEMENTS...

KNOCK

KNOCK

...INSTEAD O' BLOWIN' IT ON A DELUXE MAHOGANY CABINET 27-INCH CONSOLE **COLOR TV!**

YES? **OH**--!!

HI. I'M FROM THE E-Z CREDIT--

Y--YOU'RE --A **DUCK!!**

RIGHT. A DUCK FROM THE E-Z CREDIT APPLIANCE STORE.

I...SUPPOSE YOU'VE COME TO REPOSSESS THE TV?

NAH! I JUST GOTTA COLLECT THE $59.50 IN BACK PAYMENTS YOU OWE.

GUESS YOU'LL **HAVETA** TAKE THE SET, THEN. I AIN'T GOT THE MONEY.

HOPE YOU CAN EXPLAIN IT TO **THEM.**

WAAUGH! UH, LOOK...I **REALIZE** IT'S NONE O' MY BUSINESS, BUT... WHY'D YA **BUY** THE THING, IF--

I MEAN... WITH YOUR CIRCUMSTANCES SO **TIGHT,** AN' ALL?

I **DIDN'T** BUY IT--**BOBBY** DID. HE'S MY **HUSBAND**--WHO I AIN'T **SEEN** FOR A YEAR AND A HALF.

HE BELIEVED THE **ADS,** Y'KNOW? "COLOR TV FOR 50¢ A DAY"?

THEY DON'T **TELL** YOU IT'S FOR **FIVE YEARS**...OR THAT A $400 SET WINDS UP COSTIN' **$900**...

...OR THAT THE SET WON'T **LAST** THE FIVE YEARS YOU'RE PAYIN' ON IT...

...OR THAT IT'S SOME CHEAPIE **OFF-BRAND**...

...AND THE **REPAIRS** RUN TO SIXTY, SEVENTY DOLLARS A YEAR, AN' IT ONLY GUARANTEED FOR **NINETY DAYS!**

I BEEN KEEPIN' UP THE PAY-MENTS ALL THIS TIME...'CAUSE THE **KIDS** LOVE IT SO MUCH.

STOP IT, LADY--YOU'RE TEARIN' MY **HEART** OUT!

JUST **KEEP** THE TV. FORGET WHAT I SAID.

FORGET YOU EVER **SAW** ME.

BUT--

NO "BUTS" **ABOUT** IT, LADY. IT'S ON THE **HOUSE.**

I PAID FOR IT WITH MY **JOB.**

LATER...

NO KIDDIN', BEV-- ANOTHER SECOND AN' I'D'VE BEEN **BAWLIN'!**

I TRIED-- **HONEST!** BUT BOTH JOBS WERE SO **DEMEANING--!**

AT LEAST I MADE US DINNER MONEY **MODEL-ING** TODAY.

YEAH, BUT WE CAN'T GO ON LIVIN' **HAND-TO-BEAK** LIKE THIS!

I **GOTTA** FIND SOME-THING STEADY --AN' **LEGIT!**

TWAP

I BET IT'S YOUR **MALE EGO** THAT'S BRUISED, NOT YOUR SENSE OF **DECENCY.** YOU MEN ARE ALL **ALIKE.**

CAN'T **STAND** HAVING A WOMAN **SUPPORT** YA, CAN YA?

OKAY, SO FLIP THROUGH THE **WANT ADS!** SEE WHAT YOU CAN SCROUNGE UP.

THANKS. I **WILL...**

...**AFTER** I SKIM THE NEWS, IF THAT'S PER-MISSIBLE. I'M JUST A LITTLE **FED UP** WITH-- **WELL...!**

WELL, WELL, **WELL!**

FORGET THE WANT ADS, TOOTS!

I JUST FOUND US A ONE-WAY TICKET TO **GREEN PASTURES!**

$10,000
TO ANY MAN WHO CAN LAST THREE ROUNDS WITH WRESTLIN CHAMPION EMILE "THE GOAT" KLOUT!

CLEVELAND ATHLETIC ASSOC GYM...69 DEARB 3 P.M. TOMORROW

BEVERLY SWITZLER GASPS: "A **CEMETERY PLOT,** YOU MEAN! I'VE SEEN THAT BRUTE WRESTLE ON TV. THEY CALL HIM 'THE GOAT' BECAUSE HE **CHEWS UP** HIS OPPONENTS! EVEN **HOWARD COSELL** IS SCARED OF HIM!"

"YEAH? WELL, HOWARD THE DUCK **ISN'T!** SO **THERE!**

"TOMORROW, TOOTS, WE'RE GONNA BE SITTIN' PRETTY ON **TEN GRAND!"**

AND **FURTHER-MORE,** WHEN THIS MATCH IS **OVER--**

YOU 'N' ME ARE GONNA **BLOW** THIS TOWN, SISTER!

CLEVELAND IS TOO **SMALL-TIME** FOR US--THE STICKS, THE BOONIES!

I THINK IT'S TIME WE GOT A TASTE OF THE **BIG CITY--** AND ON $10,000 WE CAN DO IT WITH **PANACHE!** I--

YOU!!

I KNEW WE SHOULD'A TOOK A **TAXI.**

I SAW WHAT YOU DID TO **GONZO** YESTERDAY-- YOU **BEAST!**

I SAW YOU **HUMILIATE** THAT WHOLESOME SYMBOL OF FUN AND NICENESS BEFORE ALL THE KIDDIES WHO **ADORE** HIM!

IT'S HER, ISN'T IT-- THE **KIDNEY LADY!***

*WHOM WE FIRST MET IN **HTD** #2.--A.G.

THAT'S YOUR **WAY,** ISN'T IT--YOUR SUBTLE SCHEME TO SYSTEMATICALLY SUBVERT OUR SYSTEM OF VALUES!

CALL'ER OFF, BEV. I WANNA SAVE MYSELF FOR THE RING.

WELL-- ISN'T IT-- **KIDNEY THIEF??**

REALLY, MA'AM, HE'S NOT IN THE **MOOD** TO...

HIS KIND IS **NEVER** IN THE MOOD TO TALK TRUTH AND RIGHTEOUSNESS!

YOU FOOLISH LITTLE GIRL! DON'T YOU KNOW HE'S ONLY AFTER YOUR **KIDNEYS!?**

C'MON, DUCKY-- THIS'S OUR **STOP.**

YOU WON'T ESCAPE BY GETTING OFF THIS **BUS!** I'M **ONTO** YOU!

YOU'RE THE OVER-ALL **HEAD** OF THE MASSIVE INTERNA-TIONAL KIDNEY-POISONING CONSPIRACY!

YOU WAIT AND SEE--SOON I'LL HAVE **PROOF!**

WHAT **IS** IT WITH ME, BEV? WHY AM I A **MAG-NET** FOR EVERY WEIRDO--?

AH-AH! NO INTROSPECTION 'TIL **AFTER** THE MATCH!

GYM

INSIDE THE GYM...

WELL, LOOK WHAT JUST WIGGLED **IN!**

YOU LIKE **RASSLIN',** DO YA, SWEETIE?

UH-HUH. AND I'M **GOOD** AT IT, SEE?

SO **BUG OFF** BEFORE I BREAK YOUR ARM!

EH...PARK YOUR BOD, BEV. I'M GONNA SLIP INTA MY **FIGHTIN'** TOGS.

BEV NODS AND DANCES LIGHTLY OVER A ROW OF WING-TIPPED FEET TO AN UNOCCUPIED **SEAT.**

ONLY THEN, SAFELY EN-SCONCED AS JUST ANOTHER **SPECTATOR...**

...DOES SHE GLANCE TOWARD THE **RING.**

ON BEV'S TELEVISION SCREEN, EMILE KLOUT APPEARED **FORMIDABLE** INDEED. IN THE FLESH, HIS MOUNTAINOUS MUS-CULATURE GLISTENING WITH SWEAT, HIS FELL FACE FAIRLY **RADIATING** CRUELTY, HE IS NOTHING SHORT OF **MONSTROUS.**

OH, MY GOD...!

ONE BY ONE, CONTENDERS ENTER THE RING.

ONE BY ONE, THEY ARE CARRIED **OUT.**

IN A MATCH LASTING 37 SECONDS--THE **WINNER**--EMILE "THE GOAT" **KLOUT!**

THROUGH IT ALL, "THE GOAT" SPEAKS NOT A **WORD.**

MUNNGH

HE GRUNTS, SNORTS, ROARS, **BLEATS...!**

AND WHEN HE ISSUES HIS FINAL **CHALLENGE...**

THUMP

THUMP

HIS ENTIRE VOCABULARY SEEMS TO CONSIST OF INARTICULATE **CREATURE SOUNDS.**

SNNNF

BAA-HAHA

...THERE'S NOT A **TAKER** IN THE HOUSE.

BUT HE **WINS.** OVER AND OVER AGAIN, HE **WINS.**

EXCEPT ONE.

DON'T TAKE YER BOWS YET, GRUESOME.

YOU BET YOUR SWEET CHEST-HAIRS YOU GOT AN OPPONENT!

:HECCH:

...BY THE RULES OF THE OHIO STATE PINOCHLE COMMISSION, NO HITTING BELOW THE KNEES!

BONG

NOW, GET TO YOUR CORNERS AND WHEN THE BELL RINGS-- KILL!!

I'LL TRY AN' MAKE THIS PAINLESS AS POSSIBLE, EMILE.

SEE, I KNOW, QUAK-FU!

THE GOAT CHORTLES.

THE DUCK QUICKLY LEARNS WHY.

FANCY DANCING IS OF LITTLE USE AGAINST A FOE WHOSE PROFESSION IS WITHSTANDING PAIN.

INFURIATED BY THE FOWL'S ELUSIVENESS, BUT UNIMPAIRED BY HIS BLOW, THE GOAT CHARGES!

THE DUCK SIDESTEPS.

CRASH

CRIPES, HE'S ALREADY GETTING UP!

HE CAN STAND AROUND AN' TAKE THIS FOREVER--'TIL I'M ALL TUCKERED OUT!

GOTTA PUT *EVERYTHING* INTA ONE BLOW--!

RAM 'IM WHILE HE'S OFF-BALANCE--

POOINNNGG

--OR THIS DUCK'S *GOOSE* IS COOKED!

THUNK

"WOW!!

TOO BAD, SAM-- YOUR BOY'S OUT *COLD!* AND *YOU'RE* OUT TEN GRAND!

DON'T SUPPOSE I COULD INTEREST *YOU* IN A CONTRACT, HUH, PAL?

NOPE.

JUST THE *MOOLAH,* PAL. FORK IT OVER!

Y-YOU'RE --A *DUCK!!*

WAITAMINIT--OUR AD SAID $10,000 TO ANY *MAN* WHO COULD STAY IN THE RING! WE DON'T OWE YOU *NUTHIN'!!*

WHAT?

:WAAAUGH: *LEMME AT 'IM!!* I'LL--

BUT, EH, MAYBE WE CAN WORK SOMETHING *OUT...!*

SEVERAL DAYS LATER...

SO HE GOT YOU ON A *TECHNICALITY.* BUT AT LEAST HE GAVE US ENOUGH TO PAY THE *BILLS.*

AND IF WE'RE *THRIFTY,* THERE'LL BE SOME LEFT FOR A ROOM WHEN WE HIT *NEW YORK.*

BIG *DEAL!* HE HADDA PAY OFF-- OR THE *PAPERS* WOULD'A PRINTED THAT A *DUCK* GOT HIS *GOAT!*

NEXT THE *SECRET HOUSE* OF FORBIDDEN COOKIES!

HOWARD THE DUCK

MARVEL COMICS GROUP™

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TRAPPED IN A WORLD HE NEVER MADE!

HOWARD THE DUCK™

THE SECRET OF THE CELLAR SINISTER!

THERE ARE SOME THINGS THAT MAN--AND DUCK--WERE NOT MEANT TO KNOW!

From the time of his hatching, he was...different. A potentially brilliant scholar who dreaded the structured environment of school, he educated himself in the streets, taking whatever work was available, formulating his philosophy of self from what he learned of the world about him. And then the Cosmic Axis shifted...and that world *changed*. Suddenly, he was stranded in a universe he could not fathom. Without warning, he became a strange fowl in an even stranger land.

Stan Lee PRESENTS: HOWARD THE DUCK!™

STEVE GERBER. WRITER · GENE COLAN. ARTIST · STEVE LEIALOHA. INKER · JOHN COSTANZA, . letterer · GLYNIS WEIN colorist · ARCHIE GOODWIN EDITOR

A LONELY HIGHWAY IN PENNSYLVANIA MOUNTAIN COUNTRY, LATE ONE STORMY NIGHT. CRAZES OF CRACKLING ELECTRICITY **GERRYMANDER** THE SKY. THUNDER ECHOES DULLY OFF THE SIDES OF ANCIENT **HILLS.**

AND TWO CIRCLES OF LIGHT CREEP WARILY THROUGH THE ALL-ENSHROUDING **FOG.**

STEERING THOSE TWIN MOONS ON THEIR COURSE IS JOE MOUNTBATTEN, REGIONAL SALES MANAGER OF **RUBBERCORP INTERNATIONAL...**

...HEADED HOME FROM THE AMERICAN BALL MANUFACTURERS ASSOCIATION CONVENTION IN **DAYTON,** WHERE EARLIER TONIGHT HE CLOSED A MILLION-DOLLAR DEAL.

SADLY, HIS MIND IS ON HIS **TRIUMPH,** NOT ON THE BALL. AND THUS, HE IS TOTALLY **UNPREPARED...**

oh my god...

...FOR THE MIND-NUMBING SIGHT THAT SPRINGS INTO VIEW AS HE ROUNDS THE NEXT BEND!

HIS **HEART** GOES OUT TO THE LADY IN **DISTRESS...**

...TO HER BARE, FRAGILE **SHOULDERS,** BEATEN AND BATTERED BY THE UNCARING **ELEMENTS...** TO HER PLEADING **EYES** AND WIND-RAVAGED **HAIR...** BUT HIS SYMPATHY HITS A **SNAG** AT THE WEIRD CREATURE BY HER **SIDE.**

IT--IT'S **HIDEOUS--** INHUMAN-- NOT A MAN AT **ALL--** IT'S SOME **MONSTROUS** KIND OF--

THE SECRET HOUSE OF FORBIDDEN COOKIES!

DUCK!! HE'S COMIN' RIGHT AT US!!

HE :GLUP: LOST CONTROL OF THE WHEEL! HE--

SCR

Yahh

EEEEEE

SQUISHH

"LOST CONTROL" MY FOOT! HE WAS TRYIN' TA KILL US!!

C'MON BACK AN' FIGHT, YA--

OH, SAVE YOUR BREATH-- OR AT LEAST SQUAWK SOMETHING ORIGINAL, WILLYA?

HE CAN'T HEAR YOU-- SO THE LEAST YOU COULD DO IS ENTERTAIN ME--

--'CAUSE, MAN, THIS IS ALL YOUR FAULT!!

WE'VE HITCHHIKED ALL THIS WAY FROM MY WARM APARTMENT IN CLEVELAND--

AW, BEV--

--ONLY TO WIND UP HUNDREDS OF MILES FROM NOWHERE--

--ALL BECAUSE YOU WOULDN'T PUT OUT YOUR BLASTED CIGAR TO APPEASE OUR LAST DRIVER!

A LOTTA GOOD IT DIDJA, HUH?

HERE!!

TWIP

HOPE YOU'RE HAPPY!

'CAUSE :SOB: THAT MAKES ONE OF US.

:SOB: 'CAUSE I'M NOT HAPPY AT ALL! :WAAAAA:

AW, NUTS!

DON'T CRY, TOOTS. SOMEBODY'S BOUND TO COME ALONG.

EVERYTHING'LL BE ALL RIGHT, YOU'LL SEE.

NO, I WON'T. NO I WON'T!

NOBODY'LL EVER COME ALONG!

NOBODY'LL EVER USE THIS ROAD AGAIN!

:OWWAAUGH:

WUMP

WE'LL BE FORGOTTEN! WE'LL HAVE TO EAT EACH OTHER TO SURVIVE!

I MEAN--THAT'D BE UNDERSTANDABLE IN THE ANDES, HOWARD--BUT NOT IN THE POCONOS!

NO WAY IN THE POCONOS!

SO I'M--I'M LEAVING YOU, DUCKY. OUR PARTNERSHIP JUST SORTA DISSOLVED. GET IT?

NAH--YOU PROB'LY DON'T. DUCKS LIKE THIS KIND OF WEATHER, DON'T THEY?

WELL, ANYWAY... THIS IS GOOD-BYE.

IT'S BEEN FUN-- BUT I CAN'T TOLERATE YOUR STUBBORNESS OR YOUR PETTY FITS OF RAGE ANYMORE!

S-SURE. SHUCKS, IF THIS'S WHAT YA REALLY WANT. I CAN'T DENY I'M HELL TO LIVE WITH...

...SO I WON'T TRY TO STOP YA. I'LL JUST WAVE "ADIEU"... AFTER ALL, WE'RE BOTH MATURE ADULTS...

BEV!!

YEAH? NOW WHADDAYA WANT?

NOTHIN'.

FERGIT IT.

SHE DOES--AND WITHOUT MUCH **EFFORT.** FOR HER FEAR AND THE UPHILL TREK AGAINST THE **STORM** CONSUME MOST OF HER RAPIDLY WANING ENERGY.

SHE TRUDGES ON FOR HOURS, THOUGH, ON SHEER DETERMINATION, DEEPER INTO THE ENVELOPING BLACKNESS...

IDLE HANDS 2 MILES

...WITH NO HAVEN IN **SIGHT...**

...UNTIL THE SKY **DETONATES** WITH A BRISANCE OF THUNDER AND A BRILLIANT FLASH OF LIGHT...

GRRRAACKKK

...WHICH MOMENTARILY LIMNS THE OUTLINE...

...OF A LOWERING, BROODING VICTORIAN **MANSION.** BUT OF COURSE IT MUST BE **DESERTED,** SHE ASSUMES. PERHAPS SHE EVEN **HOPES** IT IS SO.

BUT--NO.

A LIGHT BURNS IN THE TOPMOST TOWER WINDOW.

AND SO BEVERLY SWITZLER SIMPLY **SETS ASIDE** HER INSTINCTIVE **CAUTION...**

...AND HEEDS INSTEAD HER INSTINCT FOR **SELF-PRESERVATION.**

KNOCK KNOCK

HELLO, IN THERE! ANYBODY **HOME?**

HOLDING HER BREATH INVOLUNTARILY, SHE **WAITS.** THE SECONDS DRAG.

UNTIL, AT LAST, THE DOOR CREAKS **OPEN** TO REVEAL...

WHO'S THERE?

H-HELLO--I'M BEVERLY SW--

OH, YES. YOU MUST BE THE NEW **GOVERNESS.**

NEW GOV--?

OH, HECK-- WHY *NOT?* ANY-THING THAT'LL GET ME IN THE DOOR!

*HOURS LATER, THE **DAWN** BREAKS... AND WITH IT, THE STORM.*

*BORNE ON THE GENTLE WIND OUT OF THE **WEST**, THE DARK CLOUDS SCUD ACROSS THE SKY...*

*...ALLOWING SHAFTS OF GOLDEN **SUN-LIGHT** ACCESS TO THE EARTH.*

*THAT SAME SOFT BREEZE ALSO PARTS THE LEAVES OF THE **TREES**, PERMITTING THE TOASTY WARMTH TO PENETRATE TO THE **GROUND**...*

*...WHERE **HOWARD**, NESTLED ON A BED OF GRASS IN THE WOODS NEAR THE ROADSIDE...*

*...STIRS **AWAKE** AT THE SOUND OF APPROACHING FOOTSTEPS AND EXCITED **VOICES**.*

GOLLY! LOOK AT THAT!

WHAT IS IT?

IT'S A *BIRD*-- LOOK AT THE *FEATHERS!*

GOSH! IS IT *DEAD?*

I DUNNO!

WOW-- MUST BE AN *EAGLE*, FROM THE *SIZE* OF IT!

AN EAGLE? WITH *WEBBED FEET?*

UH-OH!

JEEPERS! IT'S *MOVING!*

IT IS -- IT'S *ALIVE!* AND IT'S GOT *CLOTHES* ON -- AND IT'S A *DUCK!*

THE YOUNGSTERS STEP BACKWARD, CONFER IN WHISPERS...

...THE LAST DAYS...

...SATAN...

...REVELATIONS...

...KILL IT?

UH, LISTEN, GANG... I FARE MUCH BETTER AS A PARTICIPANT THAN AS A TOPIC IN CONVERSATION.

:AAAGH: IT TALKS!!

RUN AND DON'T LOOK BACK! WE'VE GOTTA TELL THE HOLY FATHER WHAT WE'VE SEEN-- AND HEARD!

HUH?

NOW WHAT BROUGHT THAT ON?

SURE, I'VE EVOKED SOME PRETTY VIOLENT REACTIONS FROM HAIRLESS APES ON OCCASION, BUT--!

THOSE PUNKS WEREN'T JUST SURPRISED.

THEY WERE SCARED HALF OUTTA THEIR BALD SKINS!

AN' I CAN'T AFFORD TO OFFEND ANYBODY WHO'S GOT WHEELS!

HEAVEN

THERE, MASTER! LURKING IN THE BRUSH! THERE IT IS! IT'S COMING!

SO I SEE. THANK YOU, WALLACE.

NOW REMAIN CALM. TRUST IN ME. WE HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR FROM SATAN.

GREETINGS, BEAST. I AM REV. JOON MOON YUC, SERVANT OF THE LORD.

AND THESE ARE MY DISCIPLES-- MY YUCCHIES.

YEAH, WELL-- I'M HOWARD THE DUCK--

--AN' THOSE'RE THE WOODS I SLEPT IN ALL LAST NIGHT.

FIGGER YOU COULD SPARE A LIFT?

I THINK... THE LORD WILLS *OTHER-WISE*, FOWL-- DON'T YOU?

ACTUALLY, WE HAVEN'T *SPOKEN* RECENTLY.

WHY DON'TCHA *BUZZ* 'IM AN' *ASK*?

I DO NOT *HAVE* TO ASK! MY WORD *IS* AS THE LORD'S!

GATHER *'ROUND* ME, MY YUCCHIES!

THIS DEVIL-DUCK HAS BEEN SENT TO TEST YOUR *FAITH!* SHIELD YOUR EYES WITH YOUR GOOD BOOKS--AND JOIN ME IN *PRAYER!*

TOGETHER, WE SHALL PREVAIL UPON THE LORD--

GULP

--TO STRIKE THIS CREATURE *DEAD* WITH A BOLT FROM *HEAVEN!*

LET US *PRAY.* HEAVENLY FATHER WHO DELIVERED THESE INNOCENT HEARTS AND MINDS INTO MY HANDS, WE BESEECH THEE TO-- *EH?*

THAT RUMBLE--LIKE GATHERING *THUNDER!* BUT I HAVEN'T EVEN FINISHED--

WHEEHEEHEEH

BAM

:WAAUGH: I DO NOT BELIEVE THIS--THE *CAVALRY* TO THE RESCUE!

AND NONE TOO *SOON.*

AND YET, THE DUCK'S *UNEASE* REFUSES TO *SUBSIDE.*

PERHAPS IT'S BECAUSE THE HORSEMAN'S GARB MORE RESEMBLES THAT OF A *HIGH-WAYMAN* THAN A SOLDIER. OR PERHAPS IT'S THE SLIGHTLY MANIACAL *GLINT* IN THE STRANGER'S RIGHT *EYE.* OR MAYBE IT'S JUST DUE TO A LONGSTANDING AESTHETIC *PREJUDICE* AGAINST OVERLY MELODRAMATIC *ENTRANCES.*

WHICHEVER, HOWARD MAINTAINS HIS GUARD...!

HOPE I'M NOT INTERRUPTING ANYTHING, FOLKS.

IT'S NOT MY HABIT TO BARGE IN THIS WAY...

...BUT MY PRESENT MISSION IS OF UTMOST URGENCY.

MY CARD, SIR.

:WAAAUGH: YOU'RE A REAL ESTATE BROKER??

SEVEN GABLES REALT CORP. & ALL NITE KEY GRINDING SERVICE SPECIALIZING IN DECAYING VICTORIAN MANSIONS OF PERNICIOUS REPUTE Heathcliff Rochester agent

I FAVOR THE TERM "LIFESTYLE CONSULTANT."

BUT WE'VE NO TIME TO WASTE OVER SEMANTICS, MY FRIEND... NOT IF YOU'RE STILL INTENT UPON SECURING THE DRAGONWORTH PROPERTY.

THE TOWNSPEOPLE ARE UP IN ARMS ABOUT HAVING YOUR... UNCONVENTIONAL RELIGIOUS CULT AT SUCH CLOSE PROXIMITY.

MY--?

I'M UNDER STRICT ORDERS FROM MY CHIEF AT SEVEN GABLES TO UNLOAD THIS ONE FAST.

DESPITE OUR UNUSUAL AREA OF SPECIALIZATION, WE ARE NOT ENAMORED OF, SHALL WE SAY... CONTROVERSY?

IT'S PREMIUM PROPERTY... BUT YOU CAN SNATCH IT UP FOR A SONG... IF YOU HUSTLE.

WHAT SAY YOU--

--REVEREND DUCK?

REV--? OH!! WELL!

I KNEW WE'D SEE EYE-TO-EYE, SIR!

WEEEE HA!

LET US HIE TO THE PROPERTY AT ONCE, THEN, EH?

YOU'RE CALLIN' THE SHOTS, PAL.

NO! WAIT!!

YOU'RE MAKING A TERRIBLE MIS-TAKE! IT'S "REVEREND YUC!"

YUC, DO YOU HEAR? YUC! YUC!!

I'M THE SECOND COMING! HE'S JUST A STUPID DUCK!!

MEANWHILE, IN THE BREAKFAST NOOK AT DRAGONWORTH...

THANK YOU FOR WAKING UP TO MAKE ME BREAKFAST, BEV.

BEV?

IS SOMETHING WRONG? DON'T YOU LIKE IT HERE, BEV?

BEV?!?

OH, NO. IT'S REALLY... COZY.

I WAS JUST LOOKING AT THE FAMILY PORTRAITS...

...LOOKING AT ME.

THAT'S GRANDMA. SHE'S DEAD.

THE TOWNS-PEOPLE STONED HER. IT HAP-PENED LAST WEEK.

YOU'LL HAVE TO SPEAK UP, PATSY! I CAN BARELY HEAR YOU DOWN HERE!

HOW ARE YOUR CORN FLAKES, DEAR?

SOGGY. I DON'T THINK YOU'RE GONNA CUT IT AS A GOVERNESS, BEV.

YOU EVER TACKLE THIS KIND OF WORK BEFORE?

NAH. I WAS AN ARTISTS' MODEL.

HEY--YOU LIVE ALONE IN THIS PLACE? I HAVEN'T SEEN ANY-BODY ELSE SINCE--

C'MON-- I'M ONLY A KID! YOU THINK THEY'D JUST LET ME TAKE CARE OF MYSELF?

MY INSANE MOTHER LIVES HERE WITH ME.

I TAKE CARE OF HER TOO.

OH, YES-- SHE DOES-- CRUELLY!

SHE NEVER LEARNS-- ONLY TEACHES.

ANYWAY, I FELT YOU SHOULD KNOW, PATSY--

THEY'RE COMING AGAIN.

THE TOWNSPEOPLE ARE COMING TO EAT YOU, MY DARLING DAUGHTER!

WHAAT? LET ME SEE!

GOSH, PATSY--THE WHOLE TOWN'S COMING UP THE HILL!

IT'S LIKE A SCENE OUT OF "FRANKENSTEIN"-- WITH A FEW CONTEMPORARY TOUCHES.

KILL! WRECK! RAZE! DESTROY! EAT!

WHAT'RE WE GONNA DO?

OH, DON'T WORRY. THIS HAPPENS ONCE A WEEK LIKE CLOCKWORK.

HEATHCLIFF WILL DRIVE THEM AWAY.

HEATHCLIFF?!?

UH-HUH. WITH THE HOUNDS.

AROOW

RUFF

ARF

AW, FUDGE! IT'S THEM DRATTED, DAD-BLAMED DAWGS AGIN!

SOMEBODY TELL ARNIE T' GIT HIS BUTT UP HERE WITH THAT FLAME-THROWER!

HE WON'T BURN DOGS--ONLY PEOPLE!

HE LIKES DOGS.

BAM!

TURN BACK, YE PROVINCIAL SWINE!

THIS ACREAGE IS ZONED RESIDENTIAL! I'LL NOT LET YOU TURN IT INTO A WHOLESALE SLAUGHTER-HOUSE!

:WAAAUGH: BETWEEN THE MIXED METAPHORS AND THE WORN-OUT SHOCKS ON THIS NAG-- I'M RATTLING TO PIECES!

C-COULDJA TAKE IT A LITTLE EASIER, CLIFFY? HUH? Y'THINK?

AN' WHILE YOU'RE AT IT, YOU MIGHT EXPLAIN--

BEV!!

INCONGRUITY UPON INCONGRUITY! THE FAMILIAR FACE AMID THE CHAOS IS THE FINAL STRAW!

WAAUGH

HOWARD COMES UNGLUED.

OH WOW, HERE COMES THE NEAT PART, BEV! THE DOGS ARE CIRCLING BACK FOR THE KILL!

THUMP

AND SO IT IS THAT BEFORE THE DUCK'S DIGNITY--LET ALONE HIS TAIL--CAN RECOVER...

HE IS TRAMPLED, DRAGGED THROUGH THE DIRT ONCE MORE...

IT'S TIMES LIKE THIS... I WISHED I'D BEEN RAISED A STOIC.

AT LEAST THEN, I WOULDN'T HAVE THE URGE TO SCREAM WHEN I'M UNABLE.

LOGICALLY, THOUGH, I SHOULD BE MORE CONCERNED THAT SUCH AN INANE THOUGHT WOULD EVEN CROSS MY MIND.

COULD IT BE? I MEAN, I REALIZE "SANITY" IS DEFINED RELATIVISTICALLY--

HOWARD, ARE YOU OKAY? THE COAST IS CLEAR. THE TOWNSPEOPLE HAVE BEEN ROUTED!

--BUT TAKE MY RELATIONSHIP WITH BEVERLY AS A PRIME EXAMPLE.

TALK ABOUT EVIDENCE OF MENTAL IMBALANCE!

WAITAMINIT... WE'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO BE SPEAKING, ARE WE?

WHY?

WHY SHOULD I CARE IF I NEVER SEE HER AGAIN? WHAT POSSIBLE MUTUAL ATTRACTION COULD RATIONALLY EXIST BETWEEN A DUCK AND-- THAT?

IT DEFIES EVERY LAW OF NATURE.

OF COURSE, I'M NOT INFLEXIBLE. I MIGHT BE PERSUADED... OR CHARMED...

ON THE OTHER HAND, I'VE NEVER FELT CONSTRAINED TO FOLLOW CONVENTION!

WHAT THE HECK. I GUESS IT'S DESTINY, TOOTS!

HOW COULD THIS BE WRONG--OR INSANE--WHEN IT FEELS SO GOOD?

Y'KNOW, DUCKY... I'M ASHAMED TO ADMIT THIS...

...BUT I MISSED YOU. I ALWAYS CONSIDERED MYSELF SO SELF-SUFFICIENT, BUT...

YEAH, I KNOW HOW IT GOES. LOVE IS STRANGE, AN ALL THAT!

BLOOP

WE BETTER SAVE THIS *PERSONAL* STUFF FOR LATER, THOUGH... IN PRIVATE.

RIGHT NOW, I'D APPRECIATE THE *LOWDOWN* ON WHAT'S HAPPENING HERE...

AS NEAR AS I CAN FIGURE, WE'VE HITCHHIKED INTO A *CROSS* BETWEEN "FRANKENSTEIN" AND "JANE EYRE".

NOT TO *MENTION* "BETTER HOMES & GARDENS"...

...*AND* "KING OF KINGS"! OR HAVEN'T YOU *MET* CLIFFY AND *JOON* YET?

WANNA *BUY* THIS DUMP?

HELLO, I'M PATSY'S *MOTHER*, THE MADWOMAN.

IT'S OKAY, HOWARD. SHE'S *HARMLESS*.

OH, YES! I JUST LIKE TO PLAY!

AND *YOU* LOOK LIKE YOU'D BE *LOTSA* FUN TO PLAY WITH--ALSO *UPON*!

YEAH?

RIPE ON! COME IN! CHEW THE FAT! CHOMP THE CORN FLAKES!

WATCH *ME* MAKE A FUNNY *NECK*!

:WAAAUGH:

KEEP YOUR *DISTANCE*, LADY--OKAY? YOU *BOTHER* ME.

AW! BUT I LIKE TO PLAY UP *CLOSE*!

WELL! LOOK WHO'S HERE!

IT'S *BEAN-SPILLING* TIME, CLIFFY! MY *SURVIVAL* MAY DEPEND ON KNOWING WHAT RILED UP THOSE TURKEYS!

BUT OF *COURSE*, REVEREND.

SO TALK!

THE TOWNSPEOPLE SUSPECT LITTLE *PATSY* HERE OF BEING SOME SORT OF... *WITCH*.

THAT'S WHY HER MOTHER HAS WISELY DECIDED TO *MOVE OUT* OF THIS CRUMBLING VICTORIAN MANSION...

...AND LEASE *ANOTHER* CRUMBLING VICTORIAN MANSE...FAR AWAY IN *WISCONSIN*.

GEE WHIZ, VILLAGERS ARE SUCH A *DRAG!*

THEY THINK I'M TRYING TO CREATE A *MONSTER* OR SOMETHING --JUST CAUSE MOM'S *BRAIN'S* BEEN WHITED OUT!

HECK, I'M NOT MAKIN' MONSTERS-- I'M JUST BAKIN' *COOKIES!*

AH, BUT THEY'RE *GODLESS* COOKIES, AREN'T THEY, LITTLE GIRL?

THAT'S WHY THE LORD SENT *ME* TO PURCHASE THIS HOUSE AND CONSECRATE IT AS MY *SEMINARY*--

--SO MY *YUCCHIES* AND I COULD EXORCISE THE EVIL FORCES *YOU'VE* QUARTERED HERE!

HMMM... SPEAKING FOR *SEVEN GABLES*--

--WE REALLY DON'T CARE *WHO* THE BUYER IS...

...SO LONG AS THE DOWN-PAYMENT IS SUFFICIENT AND WE GET *FHA* APPROVAL FOR *FINANCING.*

JEEPERS! ALL YOU GUYS EVER THINK ABOUT IS *BUSINESS!* WHAT ABOUT MY GOOD NAME?

I THINK PATSY IS A *VERY* GOOD NAME!

I *PICKED* IT. BUT MY *MOTHER* WOULDN'T LET ME KEEP IT, THE OLD CHESTNUT!

WELL, *I* THINK IT'S A GOOD NAME, *TOO,* SEE?!

SO FOLLOW *ME*-- ALL OF YOU--TO THE *TOWER!*

I'M SICK OF SEEING "PATSY" BESMIRCHED!

SO I'M GONNA PROVE TO YOU-- ONCE AND FOR ALL--THAT I'M REALLY JUST BAKING COOKIES!

UH, SWEET-HEART... THIS ISN'T EXACTLY A HOME EC LAB.

AND MUCH AS I DESPERATELY WANNA BELIEVE YOU--NO CHEF I EVER KNEW HADDA STRAP DOWN HIS PASTRIES.

TSK-TSK! I'M **TELLING** YOU--THIS WHOLE **SET-UP** IS NOTHING MORE THAN A GLORIFIED **SUZY HOMEMAKER OVEN!**

ALL THESE DIALS AND GAUGES ARE JUST **ORNA-MENTATION.**

THE STUPID THING WOULDN'T EVEN WORK--

--WITHOUT THESE TWO "D" **BATTERIES!**

EVEREADY

ALL PURPOSE

AND GRANDMA DIDN'T EVEN **INCLUDE** 'EM IN HER **WILL!**

I HADDA BUY 'EM **MYSELF**.. OUTTA MY PITTANCE OF AN **ALLOW-ANCE!**

OTHER KIDS GET PATTED ON THE HEAD FOR LEARNING **THRIFT**-- BUT NOT **ME!** I GET HASSLED BY DUMB **VILLAGERS!!**

PATSY, **WAIT!** WE BELIEVE YOU--**HONEST!**

BE A **GOOD** GIRL! DON'T--

NO!! YOU'RE **LYING!!**

YOU'RE **SCARED** OF ME-- JUST LIKE ALL THE OTHER IGNORANT, UNSCIEN-TIFIC RABBLE!

WELL, I'LL SHOW YOU!!

BANZAI!

FOR THREE LONG, AGONIZING **MOMENTS**, THE CHAMBER PULSATES WITH AN EERIE BLUISH **GLOW**. THE WALLS **TREMBLE** AND THE BASSO PROFUNDO RUMBLE OF **MACHINERY**.

AND THE COOKIE SHEET SHUDDERS.

HOWARD--I THINK IT'S **OVER** NOW...!

PATSY'S HEADED FOR THE **TABLE**!

RIGHT! FOR THE **UNVEILING**! SEE?

HERE'S WHAT YOU WERE AFRAID OF!

HEAVING A FIVE-THROATED SIGH OF **RELIEF**, THE FOUR ADULTS AND ONE DUCK STAGGER TO THE **DOOR**...

...AND FIND IT **LOCKED**...

...WHILE FIVE YEASTY **FINGERS**...

...RISE UP **ANGRY**!

AGH

ARRR

:WAAAUGH:

SON OF A CONTRACTOR...!

WH-WHAT **IS** IT?

A--A GIANT **GINGERBREAD MAN**!

NEXT

"THE WAY THE COOKIE CRUMBLES!"
PLUS 2nd BIG LAFF RIOT!
"THE **MANCHURIAN DUCK**-- PART ONE!"

HOWARD THE DUCK

MARVEL COMICS GROUP™

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TRAPPED IN A WORLD HE NEVER MADE!

HOWARD THE DUCK

FROM THE OVEN... IT RISES!

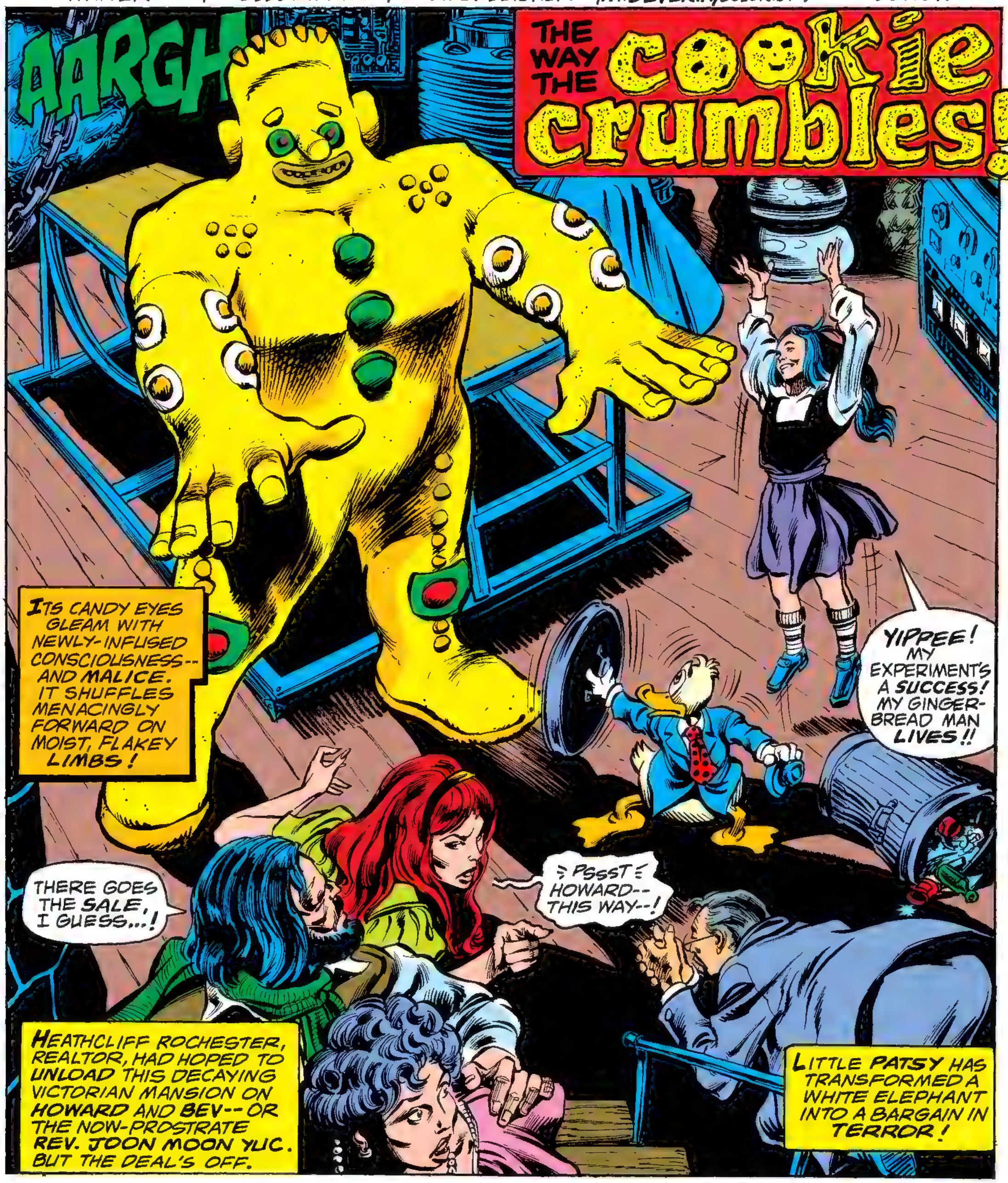
ONLY ONE FIGHTING FOWL STANDS BETWEEN AN UNSUSPECTING WORLD AND...

THE INCREDIBLE COOKIE CREATURE!

From the time of his hatching, he was...different. A potentially brilliant scholar who dreaded the structured environment of school, he educated himself in the streets, taking whatever work was available, formulating his philosophy of self from what he learned of the world about him. And then the Cosmic Axis shifted...and that world *changed.* Suddenly, he was stranded in a universe he could not fathom. Without warning, he became a strange fowl in an even stranger land.

Stan Lee PRESENTS: HOWARD THE DUCK!™

STEVE GERBER WRITER / GENE COLAN ILLUSTRATOR / STEVE LEIALOHA EMBELLISHER / JIM NOVAK, LETTERER / M. SEVERIN, COLORIST / ARCHIE GOODWIN EDITOR


AARGH
THE WAY THE cookie crumbles!
ITS CANDY EYES GLEAM WITH NEWLY-INFUSED CONSCIOUSNESS-- AND MALICE. IT SHUFFLES MENACINGLY FORWARD ON MOIST, FLAKEY LIMBS!
YIPPEE! MY EXPERIMENT'S A SUCCESS! MY GINGER-BREAD MAN LIVES!!
THERE GOES THE SALE, I GUESS...!
PSSST HOWARD-- THIS WAY--!
HEATHCLIFF ROCHESTER, REALTOR, HAD HOPED TO UNLOAD THIS DECAYING VICTORIAN MANSION ON HOWARD AND BEV-- OR THE NOW-PROSTRATE REV. JOON MOON YUC. BUT THE DEAL'S OFF.
LITTLE PATSY HAS TRANSFORMED A WHITE ELEPHANT INTO A BARGAIN IN TERROR!

DON'T TRY TO *FIGHT* IT, DUCKY!

IT'S BIGGER THAN *BOTH* OF US! LET'S JUST SLIP QUIETLY OUT OF THE *ROOM*-- OUT OF THE *HOUSE*--

--OUT OF THE STATE OF *PENNSYLVANIA!*

I'M HOT ON YER *HEELS*, TOOTS. *MARCH!*

EULP! IT'S *LOCKED!* WE'RE *TRAPPED!*

OH, GOD! DO YOU KNOW WHAT THIS *MEANS?* DID YOU SEE THE *LOOK* IN THAT MONSTER'S EYES?

IT CRAVES *REVENGE!* IT WANTS TO DEVOUR US-- WITH *MILK!!*

WHAT A *STUPID* WAY TA DIE!

I MEAN-- WHO EVER GOT EATEN BY A *COOKIE* BEFORE?

I DUNNO ABOUT *YOU*, BUT *I'M* NOT ABOUT TO BECOME AN AFTERNOON *SNACK* FOR THIS CRUMB!

THE WAY I FIGURE IT--THE *SOLUTION* IS GROSS... BUT *OBVIOUS.*

IT CAN'T EAT *US*--

--IF WE EAT IT *FIRST!!*

CHOMP

CHOMP

GLUTTONOUS MOMENTS LATER, THE "SURGERY" IS COMPLETED.

ITS RIGHT LEG **SEVERED** BY THE FOWL'S RUTHLESSLY CHOMPING BEAK, THE MONSTER COOKIE TOTTERS... TIPS... **TOPPLES** INTO LITTLE PATSY'S JURY-RIGGED **ELECTRICAL SYSTEM.**

VROOOM!

B-BUT, HOWARD, THIS EXIT LEADS TO THE **TOWER!**

=urp= OKAY, BEV! FOLLOW **ME!**

=urp= **RIGHT!**

WE'RE GONNA MAKE OUR WAY CALMLY, UNHURRIEDLY. AN' WHEN WE GET THERE--

CRASH!

WE'RE GONNA JUMP FOR OUR LIVES!!

GOSH, HOWARD! YOU THINK PATSY AND THE OTHERS GOT OUT?

MAYBE. MAYBE NOT. BUT WE'RE NOT GOIN' BACK TO CHECK!

B-BUT, HOWARD-- SHE'S JUST A LITTLE GIRL!

UH-HUH... AN' ONLY SLIGHTLY HOMICIDAL!

NONE OF WHICH, UNFORTUNATELY, ALTERS THE FACT--

--THAT THIS JOINT IS GONNA BLOW ANY MINUTE!!!

SO HUSTLE YOUR TOESIES, SWEETS! AN' WHEN I TELL YA--

HIT THE DIRT!

BLAMM

FOR A TIME THE GHASTLY RUMBLE OF THE EXPLOSION **REVERBERATES** OFF THE POCONO MOUNTAINSIDES-- A SONOROUS **DEATH-BURP** ECHOING INTO ETERNITY--

THEN, THE DIN SUBSIDES, THE SMOKE CLEARS TO **REVEAL:**

JUST **DEBRIS.** =SIGH= GUESS THE OTHERS GOT **WASTED,** HUH?

YUP. JET-PROPELLED ON THEIR WAY TO THAT BIG **ASHTRAY** IN THE SKY.

IT'S KIND OF A **SHAME** ABOUT POOR PATSY.

I DON'T THINK SHE MEANT TO **HURT** ANYBODY WITH HER EXPERIMENTS.

YEAH--WELL--THAT'S EASY FOR **YOU** TO SAY.

YOU DIDN'T TASTE THE **COOKIE!**

PHWAAAUGH

PERSONALLY, I'M CONVINCED SHE WAS A 37-YEAR-OLD **MIDGET**-- AN ESCAPEE FROM SOME PENITENTIARY'S **DEATH ROW**--

--A HATE-DRIVEN, BLOODTHIRSTY, ANTI-SOCIAL **DEVIANT**-- A WARPED, CALLOUS, CALCULATING --

NAH, SHE WAS JUST A PRODUCT OF HER **ENVIRONMENT.** C'MON, LET'S HIKE TO THE NEXT **GAS STATION.**

WE'LL **NEVER** THUMB A RIDE LOOKING THIS **GRIMY.**

YOU FIGURE WE'LL HIT NEW YORK BY **NOON?** I WANTED TO TAKE A STROLL DOWN **FIFTH AVENUE** BEFORE--

CHAPTER II GET DOWN AMERICA!

NEW YORK, HALF PAST ONE:

--AND THEN HOWARD ATE OFF ITS **LEG**, AND WE ESCAPED.

ARE YOU **REALLY** DREYFUSS GULTCH?

IF MUH **TRANSPORTATION** AIN'T CONVINCED YUH, MA'AM, AH **SHORE** DON'T KNOW WHAT WILL.

IT'S JUST SO HARD TO **BELIEVE!**

DG

TEXAS D*G

NO TOUGHER 'N THAT **YARN** YOU JUST SPUN, HON.

NO, I MEAN-- WHAT'S A **COUNTRY-WESTERN** STAR DOING IN, UH, **THESE** PARTS?

I WAS JUST ASKIN' **MYSELF** THE SAME--

AH'M HERE BY **INVITATION**, SWEETHEART!

GONNA SING THE **NATIONAL ANTHEM** AT THE OPENIN' O' THE ALL-NIGHT NATIONAL CONVENTION.

THE **WHAT?**

WEST SIDE DRIVE KEEP RIGHT

TEXAS D*G

THE ALL-NIGHT **PARTY.** Y'KNOW, LIKE THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY AN' THE REPUBLICAN PARTY?

THEY'RE HAVIN' THEIR **GIT-TOGETHER** IN NEW YORK TO PICK THEIR **PRESIDENTIAL** NOMINEE.

AN' **SHUCKS** IF THEY DIDN'T ASK **ME** TA STAR-SPANGLE THE LIVIN' **BANNER** OUTTA 'EM!

GEE, I DON'T THINK I'VE EVER HEARD OF *THAT* PARTY. HAVE *YOU*, HOWARD?

DON'T MENTION *POLITICS* TO ME, BEV.

I NEVER *TOUCH* THE STUFF.

IT'S A LAW OF *NATURE*: YOU CAN'T CHANGE ANYBODY'S MIND ABOUT *POLITICS* OR *RELIGION*.

REV. YUC'S BICENTENNIAL PRAYER MEETING AND KOREAN KARATE EXHIBITION NEXT WEEK

SPEAKING OF WHICH... GUESS THEY'LL HAVE TO *CALL OFF* THAT DOUBLE-BONANZA. TOO BAD.

MR. GULTCH, THERE WOULDN'T BE ANY *JOBS* OPEN AT THE CONVENTION, WOULD THERE?

WE'RE FLAT BROKE. WE NEED TO RUSTLE UP SOME QUICK BREAD TO GET AN *APARTMENT*.

WA-A-ALL--

ORDINARILY, AH DON'T LAHK T' USE MAH POWERFUL *INFL'ENCE* THAT WAY--BUT AH *S'POSE* AH COULD MAKE AN *EXCEPTION*...

...FOR SUCH AN EXCEPTIONAL PAIR AS *YOU*.

HEY, HOWIE--MAYBE WE CAN GITCHA A JOB AS THE *MAIN COURSE* AT THE BANQUET. WHATCHA THINK?

KILL.

HEAH'S THE *HOTEL*. NOW Y'ALL JES' STICK CLOSE *BY* ME, HEAR?

'CAUSE SOON'S AH STEP OUTTA THE DOOR, WE'LL BE *MOBBED*, SEE?

REPORTERS, AUTOGRAPH HOUNDS--Y'ALL *WATCH*.

WELCOME ALL-NIGHT PARTY

AND, SHORE 'NUFF:

GIVE US A SMILE, MR. GULTCH!

NOT TILL AH SEE MUH HOST IN THIS FAIR CITY, SON. WHERE IS HE? WHERE'S THE PARTY CHAIRMAN?

HERE!!

WALL, ASSERT YOURSELF, BOY--SHOVE ON THROUGH!

GOT SOME FRIENDS AH WANTCHA TA MEET. THET THERE'S HOWIE--

HEL-LO, GLAD TO-- ≥ULP≤ Y-YOU'RE A DUCK!!

AN' THIS'S BEVERLY

Y'ALL FIGGER WE COULD DIG UP A ROOM AN' A COUPL'A JOBS FOR 'EM DURIN' THIS HERE SHINDIG?

WELL, I-- YOU'VE CERTAINLY PUT ME ON THE SPOT, DREY, BUT-- FOLLOW ME. WE'LL TRY OUR BEST.

AND SHORTLY...

YAH-HOO!! A SUITE AT THE PLAZA! WE MADE IT!! WE MADE IT!!

KNOCK KNOCK

ALL THE WAY FROM CLEVELAND TO LUXURY!!

GET THE DOOR, WILLYA, BEV? I'M BUSY--

--EXULTING!

MS. SWITZLER AND MISTER... DUCK?

OH, WOW-- PRESENTS!

AND A MESSAGE, YES MA'AM.

I'LL TAKE THEM. YOU DON'T--

IS THERE SOMETHING ELSE? I--

OH.

YES--HOW *RUDE* OF ME--I'M SORRY--THANK YOU--THANK YOU--=*MMMNMPH*=--OH, GOD, YES--*THANK YOU*--=*MMMMNNMPHF*=

TH-THAT'S OKAY, LADY--REALLY--I'D'VE SETTLED FOR *TWO BITS!*

SEE YA.

STAY PUT! I'LL SHOW YA IN A *SEC!*

HEY, WHAT'S GOIN' *ON* OUT THERE? WHO WAS IT?

TA-DAH!!

HI, I'M BEV, YOUR HOSPITALITY GIRL!

HOW'S *THAT* SOUND?

LIKE A *COME-ON.* WHAT'S THE *NOTE* SAY?

I *DUNNO.* I MEAN, I KNOW THE *WORDS...*

The mix is in the pan. Just thought You'd like to know. A friend.

BUT I CAN'T MAKE *SENSE* OF IT.

HERE--*LOOK.*

=HMPH= SOUNDS LIKE *GULTCH* ACCEPTING YOUR OFFER OF *HOSPITALITY.*

LET'S SEE WHAT KINDA GET-UP THEY SENT *ME.*

SOON...

GEE... HOWARD THE *PIG.* YOU SWING THAT STICK LIKE A *NATURAL.*

CAN IT, BEV. YOU KNOW I'M UNCOMFORTABLE AS AN AUTHORITY FIGURE.

THAT'S WHAT THEY ALL SAY--TILL THEY PUT ON THE *UNIFORM!*

YOU REVEL IN THAT SENSE OF POWER-- AND YOU KNOW IT.

LISTEN, TOOTS-- ANY CHUMP THAT'S DEPENDENT ON DUDS FOR HIS POWER DOESN'T REVEL TOO LONG.

MADIS[illegible] GARDEN

MMM...LOOKS LIKE THIS IS WHERE WE PART COMPANY, PAL.

WANNA MEET BACK HERE AFTER WORK?

SECURITY

HOSPITALITY

OKAY BY ME. CATCH YA LATER.

"SENSE OF POWER"-- NUTS! SURE, EVEN ON MY WORLD FOLKS COSTUMED THEMSELVES TO ACHIEVE OR REINFORCE A SOUGHT-AFTER SELF-IMAGE...!

...BUT YA DON'T IMMEDIATELY INTERNALIZE-- --AHH, SKIP IT!

THEY'RE NOT PAYIN' ME TA THINK.

SECURITY OFFICE

SHIELD 1242 REPORTING FOR DU--

AW, NO.

WHAT CAN I DO FOR YA, DEPUTY? TALK FAST. I'M A BUSY, BUSY MAN.

AIN'T THAT RIGHT, LINDA?

BUSY MAKING ME FEEL SECURE, CHIEF.

YEAH. RIGHT. I WAS JUST WONDERIN' WHAT MY DETAIL'S GONNA BE.

I DUNNO. I DON'T CARE.

SHOP AROUND--FIND SOMETHING YA LIKE.

OKAY, LOVER-BOY... YOU'RE THE **BOSS**. I'LL JUST PLAY **TROUBLE-SHOOTER!**

AMBLE AROUND TILL SOMETHIN' CATCHES MY EAR OR **EYE** AN'--

AAAGH!

WELL. **THAT** DIDN'T TAKE FOREVER, DID IT?

AH-**HAH!** JUST AS I SUSPECTED-- A **COMMITTEE MEETING!**

IF THIS WERE ANYTHING BUT POLITICS, THAT SCREAM WOULD'A BEEN GOOD FOR **MURDER ONE!**

I **REPEAT**, MR. SANGOR HAS THE FLOOR!

THANK YOU, MR. CHAIRMAN! AS I WAS SAYING, THIS IS THE **REAL** WORLD--WHERE THE **RUSSKIES** WILL KILL THEIR OWN PEOPLE IN THE INTEREST OF **NATIONAL SECURITY!**

OUR INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES MUST HAVE THE **SAME** FREEDOM TO OPERATE IF--

NO!!

THE CIA MUST LEARN **MODERATION!** OF **COURSE**, OUR MEN IN MUFTI DESERVE OUR SUPPORT...

...BUT WE CANNOT STOOP TO CONDONE ASSASSINATION--EXCEPT IN **SELF-DEFENSE!**

I'M AFRAID MR. SANGOR'S PREDICTABLY ANIMALISTIC CONSERVATISM AND MR. LANGOR'S JELLYFISH LIBERALISM BOTH FAIL TO ADDRESS THE **REAL** ISSUE, MR. CHAIRMAN.

WE'VE GOT TO GET THE **DUMB** PEOPLE OUT OF **INTELLIGENCE!**

=WAAUGH=

THAT'S IT. I'M SPLITTIN'.

WAIT!!

YOU! WHAT'S YOUR OPINION? SPEAK UP! DON'T BE SHY! WE NEED A PLATFORM PLANK AND WE'RE DEAD-LOCKED!

WE'LL TAKE ANYTHING!

THE FIRST THING YOU'LL TAKE IS YOUR HANDS OFF ME!!

THEN, ANSWER ONE SIMPLE QUESTION:

"ANY O' YOU TURKEYS KNOW ANY-THING ABOUT INTELLIGENCE??"

WELL...

EH...

NOT FIRST-HAND, BUT...

TELL THE TRUTH, THEN! SAY YA DON'T KNOW-- BUT THAT YOU'LL FIND OUT ALL YA CAN-- AN' WHEN YA DO--

PLOP

--THE BAD GUYS BETTER WATCH OUT!

BRAVO! A MAGNIFICENT STATEMENT! REVOLU-TIONARY! DID ANYONE WRITE IT DOWN?

EVERY WORD! WHY DO YOU SUPPOSE HE WEARS THAT DUCK SUIT?

EARLY EVENING, AT THE APPOINTED PLACE...

--AND THEN HE SAID, "WHADDAYA MEAN, NOT ON THE CONVENTION FLOOR?" SO I HADDA--

HEY, YOU LOOK BUSHED. WHY DON'T I FINISH THE STORY OVER A CUP O' COFFEE?

I DON'T THINK I CAN SIT, DUCKY-- MY POOR BOTTOM HAS BEEN PINCHED WITH-IN AN INCH OF ITS LIFE!

LET'S GO BACK TO THE HOTEL WHERE I CAN LIE DOWN, HUH? PLEASE?

AND SO...

OBOY. THE PRAIRIE TROUBADOUR MUST'A STOPPED BY AGAIN.

YEP.

The ice cream's on the cake.

Just thought you'd like to know.

A friend.

LET ME SEE...

HOWARD...Y'KNOW, I DON'T THINK GULTCH **WROTE** THIS NOTE.

THE SPELLING **IS** BETTER THAN YOU'D **EXPECT**, BUT-- AAH, WHAT DO **WE** CARE?!

NEXT DAY...

OHIO

I DON'T **LIKE** IT. IT'S TOO **PLACID**. IT CAN'T **LAST**!

...DEBATE ON MINORITY OPINION...

...IN A DIGNIFIED FASHION...

...WITHOUT COMPROMISING THE PRINCIPLES UPON...

VOTE FOR AL

BEEF JERKIES?? WHY, YOU--!

WACK

I KNEW IT.

THIS--**TURNCOAT** BACKED OUT ON OUR SECOND-BALLOT **BARGAIN**!

OKAY, OKAY-- BREAK IT **UP**, YA BOZOS!

LET'S HAVE A LITTLE **DECORUM**, SEE--OR I'LL BASH YER **TEETH** IN!!

WE HAD A **DEAL**!

WE'D THROW **OUR** SUPPORT TO **WAULDRAP** ON THE THIRD BALLOT--

WAULDROP

WAULDRAP

--IF **WE** PROMISED HALF OUR VOTES TO **WAULDROP** ON--

ENOUGH!!

GIMME THOSE PLACARDS! I'LL SHOW YA HOW TA SWAP VOTING BLOCS!

NOW WATCH CAREFULLY...

YA JUST SORTA FLIP 'EM, SEE? OKAY, WAULDROP JUST GOT ONE VOTE!

WAULDROP

NOW, GATHER UP ALL YER PLACARDS...AN' JUST KEEP FLIPPIN'--

--TILL ONE OR THE OTHER OF YA HAS ALL THE CARDS.

YA GOT IT? NOT TOO COMPLEX?

GOOD!

=HAW= NICE SHOT, LI'L BUDDY. AH LAHK YORE STYLE.

HOW'S THING'S GOIN' FOR YOU AN' THET LUSCIOUS LADY?

SWELL, GULTCH. REAL PEACHY.

LOOK, I'M SUPPOSED TO BE GUARDIN' THIS ASYLUM, NOT CHATTING. WHAT'S ON YOUR ALLEGED MIND?

DON'T GIT RILED UP NOW. I WAS JES' GONNA INVITE Y'ALL OUT ON THE TOWN WITH ME 'N' SOME O' THE PARTY BIGWIGS TONIGHT.

NEVADA

'CAUSE YA LAHK MUH STYLE, HUH?

WEL-L-L, AW--WHY NOT? I NEED A LITTLE DISTRACTION, IF I'M GONNA AVOID GETTIN' DRIVEN THERE!

ALAS, THAT NIGHT...

SOME DISTRACTION! THIS HAS GOTTA BE THE ONLY SPOT IN NEW YORK--

--LOUDER AN' SLEAZIER THAN THE CONVENTION!

YOUR CHECK, SIR.

HUH...?

HOPE THOSE BUMS CAN PAY **UP** FOR WHAT THEY KNOCKED **BACK**, PAL.

YEAH. I--

HEY! WAIT! COME BACK!

BLUE GARTER
GUEST CHECK

It's all in the oven. Just thought you'd like to know.

Beverages— $74.32

--A friend

IT'S OUR PLE TO SERVE

NEXT DAY:

I DON'T GET IT. SOUNDS MORE LIKE SOMEBODY'S MAKING **BAKED ALASKA** THAN PLOTTING ANYTHING SINISTER.

MADISON SQUARE GARDEN

RIGHT. WE GOT A COMPULSIVELY SHY **RECIPE** AUTHOR ON OUR--

WAAAAUGH

LATER, BEV! I GOTTA REPORT TO THE CHIEF-- **FAST!**

MUSTER THE **TROOPS**, BOSS! THERE'S A **BOMB** ON THE CONVENTION FLOOR!

I'LL SAY! THEY'RE GOING WITH **WAULDROP** AS THE NOMINEE.

NEVER ONE TO PERSIST IN THE FACE OF **FUTILITY**, THE DUCK RACES **ALONE** TO THE **ROSTRUM**.

ALASKA

WA

YEP. JUST LIKE I **FIGURED**. THE DELEGATIONS ARE SEATED **ALPHABETICALLY**. ALASKA'S RIGHT UP **FRONT**.

SO NOW I GOTTA **ASK** MYSELF-- DO I **REALLY** WANNA GET INVOLVED IN THIS? OR WOULD THE **SUPERIOR** DUCK JUST **SCRAM** AND SAVE HIS OWN TAIL FEATHERS?

IT'S NOT LIKE ANY-BODY'D *MISS* WAULDROP.

FSSSST

ALASKA

AAH-- WHO'M I *KIDDING*? I CAN'T KNOWINGLY LET EVEN A *POLITICIAN* DIE!

AND SO I SAY TO THIS CONVENTION-- *PUSH! THROTTLE! WHINE!*

HE DOESN'T EVEN SEE WHAT'S *HAPPENIN'*!

WAULDRO

ALASKA

TOO *MESMERIZED* BY THE SOUND OF HIS OWN *BANALITIES*!

LOOK! THE ALASKA *STANDARD'S* ON FIRE!!

ALASKA

FIRE, *NOTHIN'*! IT'S A *BOMB*! EVERYBODY--

--SCATTER!!

EEEEEEE

GREAT! NOW I'VE *GOT* THE THING, WHAT *DO* I *DO* WITH--

AH-HAH! SEVEN LAYERS OF *SALVATION!*

THE PARTY'S *BICENTENNIAL BIRTHDAY CAKE!* THIS *MUST* BE MY *WEEK* FOR BAKED GOODS!

IT'S BEEN A LOTTA *YEARS* SINCE I LAST *POLE-VAULTED*-- BUT IF I CAN RAM THE BOMB INTO THE *CAKE*, MAYBE--

TAKE *COVER!* ALL O' YA! TAKE--

SQUIISHH

--COVER!

BLAMMM

AND THEN, WHEN *PUSH* COMES TO *SHOVE* MY FELLOW AMERICANS--

--I *QUIT!* SORRY. THE JOB'S TOO DANGEROUS. GOOD DAY, AND GOOD *LUCK.*

WAL

TOO BAD. I SAVED YOUR *SKINS*, BUT LOST YA YOUR *CANDIDATE.*

EXPOSED 'IM, YUH MEAN! WE WANNA *MAN* IN THE WHITE HOUSE, HOWIE-BOY!

WE WANT *YOU--HERO!*

HAH...?

HOW 'BOUT IT? Y'ALL AVAILABLE FOR A *DRAFT?*

WELL... I MEAN... I GUESS I GOT NOTHIN' *PLANNED* BETWEEN NOW AN' *NOVEMBER*, BUT--

WE

WANT THE DUCK!
WE WANT THE DUCK!

THAT *SETTLES* IT, THEN! THE PEOPLE'S VOICE HAS BEEN *HEARD!*

YOU'RE OUR DUCK!!

NEXT

OPEN SEASON

OR: "THE ROAD TO THE WHITE HOUSE IS PAVED WITH SHELL-CASINGS"

12
1976

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HOWARD THE DUCK

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FIVE VILLAINS IN SEARCH OF A PLOT!

THEY'RE *HERE*-- JUST AS HE *SAID* THEY'D BE.

YEP. RIGHT HERE IN *CENTRAL PARK*-- AT *MIDNIGHT!*

Oh, ♪ Suzanna ♪

JAHWOHL! SO LET'S GET THIS MARSH-MALLOW ROAST *COOKIN'*--

--YOU *SWINE!*

INTRODUCE YOURSELVES-- ALL OF YOU-- OR I'LL GIVE YOU SUCH A LICKIN'--!

I'M *SITTING BULLSEYE*, EX-CIA OPERATIVE--'TIL I INFILTRATED THE AMERICAN INDIAN MOVEMENT LOOKIN' FOR PROOF THEY WAS MAKIN' BOOTLEG *FIRE WATER!*

THEM REDSKINS CRACKED MY *COVER*--

--TATTOOED A *TARGET* ON MY CHEST, AND CHASED ME OFF THE RESERVATION. I LOST MY *JOB*, NATCH.

I MEAN, HOW COULD I WORK *UNDERCOVER* WITH AN IDENTIFYING MARK LIKE *THIS*?!

EMBITTERED, I--

AAH-- *SHUDDUP!*

I'M *TILLIE THE HUN!*

AND I AM-- THE *SPANKER*, FORMER HEAD-MASTER OF AN EXCLUSIVE PRIVATE *PREP* SCHOOL--

--WRENCHED FROM MY POSITION FOR ADMINISTERING EXCESSIVE *CORPORAL PUNISHMENT.*

≷urk≷ YOU CAN CALL ME "*BLACK HOLE.*" I WAS PLAYIN' HAND-BALL IN BROOKLYN ONE DAY WHEN A GRAIN OF *DWARF STAR MATTER* FELL FROM SPACE--

--AND *IMBEDDED* ITSELF IN MY BREASTBONE.

THIS ENDOWED ME WITH AN EXTREMELY *GROSS* POWER. I--

SUDDENLY--

AWRIGHT, YOU CLOWNS!

THE JIG'S *UP!* OPEN FIRES ARE AGAINST THE *LAW* IN THIS BURG!

BESIDES, THIS PARK *CLOSES* AT TEN P.M.!

CHANK

OH, *YEAH??*

SEZ *YOU,* FLATFOOT!!

FREEZE, TONTO! I GOT A BEAD DEAD *CENTER* ON--

I KNOW. THEY *ALWAYS* DO.

BUT FORTUNATELY FOR *ME*--

TWAK

I *LEARNED* A LOT FROM THEM INJUNS BEFORE THEY GOT *WISE* TO ME!

I LEARNED, ALSO--

-- FROM THE LILY-LIVERED LIBERAL *PARENTS* OF MY STUDENTS!

I LEARNED THAT IF *JUSTICE* IS TO TRIUMPH--

-- A MAN MUST SOMETIMES TAKE THE LAW INTO HIS OWN HANDS AND OVER HIS *KNEE!*

WHAP

STAND **ASIDE**, YOU TURKEYS! I'M GONNA SHOW YOU WHY I **LOST** THAT HANDBALL GAME AND EARNED THE **CONTEMPT** OF ALL THE **POPULAR** KIDS!

HIS EYES SQUEEZE SHUT. HIS BROW **FURROWS**--!

--HE CONCENTRATES **MIGHTILY**...

...AND AN EBONY **CAVITY** YAWNS OPEN IN HIS CHEST!

AND LIKE THE COSMIC PHENOMENON WHICH IS HIS **NAMESAKE**...

THE BLACK HOLE SUCKS!!

AAAARGH

THE POLICE ARE DRAWN HELPLESSLY INTO THE VORACIOUS VOID AT HIS **HEART**...

...AND **SEALED** THEREIN...

...PERHAPS **FOREVER.**

=phwecch= THAT'S THE MOST **REPULSIVE** THING I'VE EVER SEEN!

YEAH. **AWFUL**, AIN'T IT?

YES! **YES!** IT'S UGLY-- LOATHESOME-- UNSPEAKABLY **GROTESQUE**--

--KNOWING IT WAS **I** WHO SUMMONED YOU FOUR TO THIS PLACE-- **I** WHO PRECIPITATED THE **DEATHS** OF THOSE INNOCENT MEN--!

--IT'S PSYCHOLOGICAL **TORTURE!!**

AND I'M **LOVING** EVERY HORRIFIC **MINUTE** OF IT!

FOR I AM **DR. ANGST,** MASTER OF MUNDANE MYSTICISM--

--AND AS GLORIOUS A **WASH-OUT** AS ANY OF YOU!

DON'T ATTEMPT TO **DENY** IT! WE ALL SHARE A COMMON FAULT! **NONE** OF US HAS EVER HAD AN **ORIGINAL** THOUGHT IN HIS OR HER LIFE!

THAT'S WHY-- **DESPITE** OUR PRODIGIOUS TALENTS--NO ONE'S EVER HEARD OF **ANY** OF US!

WE'RE TOO **DERIVATIVE**--TOO STEREOTYPICAL--

--EVEN TO MAKE NAMES FOR OURSELVES AS '**SUPER-VILLAINS!**'

BUT NO MORE!!

I'VE FOUND OUR WAY **OUT** OF ANONYMITY--AND INTO THE **BIG BUCKS!**

JOIN **ME**--AND YOU'LL **ALL** BE ON THE COVER OF NEXT MONTH'S ISSUE OF "**CELEBRITY!**"

HUH...?

JOIN ME--IN MY PLOT TO **ASSASSINATE** THE ALL-NIGHT PARTY'S CANDIDATE FOR **PRESIDENT!**

WAAAUGH.

the DUCK™ and THE DEFENDERS™

QUIET DIGNITY AND UNDERSTATED ELEGANCE ARE THE **HALLMARKS** OF NEW YORK'S PARKSIDE PLAZA HOTEL.

EVEN WHEN THE MANAGEMENT **BOOTS** A GUEST OUT ONTO THE SIDEWALK FOR NON-PAYMENT OF HIS **BILL**, THE MATTER IS HANDLED WITH **TASTE**.

WAAAUGH

TCH.

GO! AND NEVER DARKEN OUR DOOR AGAIN!

AAH, CUT THE ARISTO-CRATIC ROUTINE, CURLY! IF YOU REALLY HAD ANY CLASS--

--YOU'D'VE HAD THAT UNDERBITE FIXED YEARS AGO!

WELL...IT WAS FUN WHILE IT LASTED, HUH?

YEAH. A BALL. I SPOTTED THOSE ALL-NIGHT CREEPS FOR WELCHERS FROM THE START!

AW, C'MON, DUCKY.

IT WAS PROBABLY JUST AN OVERSIGHT.

IRT SUBWAY DOWNTOWN

YOU'RE A PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE. I'M SURE THEY JUST ASSUMED YOU WERE RICH.

OR HOW COULD I AFFORD TO RUN, RIGHT?

59

REET

UH-HUH. I'M POSITIVE-- WHEN THEY HEAR WHAT HAPPENED, THEY'LL BE IN TOUCH.

AND WHAT DO WE DO IN THE MEANTIME, TOOTS--

--RIDE BACK'N'FORTH BETWEEN HERE AND CONEY ISLAND 'TIL WE DROP?

NAH.

I KNOW SOME STEWARD-ESSES--OLD HIGH SCHOOL CHUMS FROM CLEVELAND-- WHO'VE GOT A HOUSE IN GREENWICH VILLAGE.

SWELL, SO ALL WE GOTTA DO IS GET THERE ALIVE, RIGHT?

LATER, ALIVE AND IN THE **VILLAGE**...

WHAT A **WEIRD** PLACE, EVERYBODY LOOKS LIKE **AL PACINO**.

LISTEN -- MY **FEET** ARE ALREADY GETTIN' **CALLOUSED**. DO YOU KNOW WHERE WE'RE **GOIN'**?

'CAUSE IF **NOT**, I SUGGEST YOU STOP THE FIRST PERSON YOU SEE WHO DOESN'T LOOK LIKE A **DERANGED KILLER**--

--AND ASK **DIRECTIONS**. RIGHT!

EXCUSE ME, **YOU** LOOK PRETTY HARMLESS, COULD YOU--?

I BEG YOUR **PARDON**?

HEY-- **HI!** HOW'VE YOU **BEEN**? I HAVEN'T SEEN **YOU** SINCE--

SINCE BEFORE **WE** GOT IT ON, I HOPE-- **PAL**.

OH, NO. HE'S NEVER SEEN ME AT **ALL**.

I'M **NEW** IN TOWN-- FRESH FROM **CLEVELAND**.

UH-HUH. AN' SPEAKING OF **FRESH**--!

GULP! **NOW** I RECOGNIZE HER-- AND BARELY IN TIME TO PROTECT MY **SPIDER-MAN** IDENTITY!

SHE'S **BEVERLY SWITZLER**. I'D KNOW HER **DUCK** ANYWHERE!

I, UH--I'M **SORRY**. SHE LOOKS JUST LIKE--

CHARLES STREET? SURE!

"SIX BLOCKS EAST AND HANG A LEFT," SHE SAID.

WHATEVER--AS LONG AS WE'RE TRUDGIN' **AWAY** FROM THAT BABY-FACED **MASHER**!

SIX BLOCKS EAST, ETC., ETC....

ARE YOU **SURE** THIS'S THE ADDRESS?!

IT **IS** KINDA **SPACIOUS** FOR TWO STEWARD-ESSES AND A **CAT**, HUH?

RRRING

FOR THE **RENT** ON THIS PLACE THEY COULD BUY THEIR OWN **AIRLINE.**

BUT--NOTHIN'TO LOSE BY **ASKIN'**, I GUESS.

RELAX, WONG! I'M RIGHT HERE, **I'LL** ANSWER IT.

YES, WHAT CAN I DO FOR Y--

Y-YOU'RE--A **DUCK!**

;chortle; NO **OFFENSE**, PAL-- BUT YOU'RE HARDLY IN A POSITION TO **CRITICIZE!**

OH, **WOW**--!

I KNOW YOU! I'VE SEEN YOUR PICTURE IN THE **PAPERS!**

YOU'RE-- WAITAMINIT-- IT'S ON THE TIP OF MY--

YOU'RE THE **FALCON**, AREN'T YOU?!

SOMETHING LIKE THAT.

HEY, DOC-- **VISITORS!** AND FROM THE **LOOK** OF 'EM, THEY COULD **ONLY** BE FOR **YOU!**

NO, NO-- THIS IS ALL A **MISTAKE.**

WE DON'T NEED A **DOCTOR.**

IN RESPONSE TO **NIGHTHAWK'S** SUMMONS, THREE IMPOSING FIGURES EMERGE FROM THE DOUBLE-DOORS OF THE PARLOR.

VALKYRIE: LIVING EMBODIMENT OF AN ANCIENT NORSE LEGEND!

DR. STRANGE: MASTER OF THE MYSTIC ARTS, AND, INCIDENTALLY, **OWNER** OF THIS SANCTUM SANCTORUM!

THE INCREDIBLE HULK: BRUTAL, BESTIAL BEHEMOTH BORN OF GAMMA RAYS!

TOGETHER WITH NIGHTHAWK, THEY FORM THE NEXUS OF A LOOSE CONFEDERATION OF SUPERHUMANS KNOWN AS **THE DEFENDERS!**

NATURALLY. A WHOLE **NEST** OF ZANIES. MY DAY IS **COMPLETE.**

HELA'S GHOSTS! STEPHEN, WHO--?!

VISITORS, VAL-- JUST AS KYLE PRESUMED.

THOUGH I SUSPECT ***ONE*** OF THEM HAS TRAVELLED AN ***INORDINATE*** DISTANCE TO PAY US THIS CALL.

JEEZ--!

DON'T ***FLATTER*** YOURSELF, MAC. WE JUST TOOK A WRONG ***TURN.***

LET'S ***SPLIT,*** BEV.

I DON'T LIKE THE ***LOOK*** O' THIS--

:WAAAWPGH:

TWAP

PLEASE ***FORGIVE*** THE MYSTIC ***BARRIER*** I'VE ERECTED, MY FRIEND.

MYSTIC--?! I KNEW IT! A ***SORCERER!*** I CAN ***SMELL*** 'EM A MILE AWAY!!

WELL, DON'T THINK I'M ***SCARED,*** BUSTER-- BY YOU ***OR*** THE GREEN GUY ***OR*** THE SWORD-LADY ***OR*** THAT WACKO WITH THE CASE OF ***FEATHER-ENVY!***

SUCH WAS NEVER MY ***INTENTION.*** I MERELY BELIEVE-- WE MAY HAVE MUCH-- TO ***DISCUSS.***

MEANWHILE...

Feelgood's FUNHOUSE

GUILT! GUILT FOR THE PLIGHT OF THE MASSES--!

THAT'S WHAT DROVE ME TO ESTABLISH MY CITADEL OF MUNDANE MAGIC IN THIS DINGY APARTMENT--

--OVER A SEEDY MASSAGE PARLOR IN THE MOST SQUALID SECTION OF THIS DEGENERATE CITY!

IT KEEPS ME IN TOUCH WITH REALITY...

...AS DO THE TERRESTRIAL TALISMANS UPON MY ALTAR!

MY EUCHA-RITZ CRACKERS, MY ALL-SEEING ICE--

--AND MY BARBECUE TRIDENT AND BOWL OF CHERRIES!

BEHOLD-- FOR HEREIN LIES OUR SALVATION!

WE MAY YET ESCHEW OUR SLAVISH ADHERENCE TO OUTMODED TRADITION--

--WITH THESE!

METTLE SPHERES-- CAST FROM THE OTHER-WORLDLY ALLOY PROMETHIUM!

THAT'S RIGHT-- COME AND **GET** IT--

--THE COURAGE TO **CREATE**, TO **QUESTION**, TO **EXPLORE.**

H-HEY-- THESE THINGS'RE **RED HOT!!** WHADDA WE **DO** WITH 'EM?!

SWALLOW THEM, MY FRIENDS. MANUAL MANIPULATION OF YOUR SPHERES AMOUNTS TO MERE **POSTURING.**

THEY MUST BE **INTERNALIZED.**

FOUR GULPS LATER:

IT'S **TRUE!** I'M **STRONGER!** I CAN **FEEL** IT!

ME, TOO! WHAT **MUSCLES!**

I FEEL LIKE I COULD SUCK IN A **HORSE!**

OF COURSE, THE EFFECT IS PURELY **TRANSITORY.** TO PROLONG THE INVIGORATION INDEFINITELY--

--ONE REQUIRES A **LIFETIME SUPPLY** OF SPHERES.

ALAS, **MY** WORLDLY WIZARDRY CANNOT CREATE THEM. I STUMBLED UPON THESE IN A **RUMMAGE SALE.**

BUT DESPAIR NOT! GAZE WITH ME INTO MY **PEDESTRIAN PROGNOSTICATOR.**

"THAT MAN HAS THE MYSTIC TOOLS WE NEED. WE MUST SEIZE THEM--AND MAKE SOME CASH ON THE SIDE--

"--BY KILLING THE DUCK! WHAT SAY YOU?"

IF THIS IS WHAT IT'S LIKE TO POSSESS SPHERES--

--LET'S GO GET 'EM!!

SO SAY WE ALL!!

EXCELLENT--

--YOU FOOLS. HEH HEH

--AND THESE ARE PREDILUVEAN SCULPTURES CULLED FROM--

UH--NOT TO INTERRUPT, DOC, BUT FOR A SORCERER YOU'RE SORTA LOOSE-TONGUED, AREN'T CHA?

MOST GUYS IN YOUR PROFESSION ARE PRETTY SECRETIVE--UNLESS THEY WANT SOMETHING. TRUE?

QUITE CORRECT, BUT ALL I DESIRE IS YOUR OPINION--AS A BEING WHO ALSO HAS SEEN BEYOND THIS REALITY.

I'VE NOTED AN UNUSUAL DEGREE OF MYSTICAL ACTIVITY IN THE WIND RECENTY. I WONDERED--

NAH.

CLOSEST I EVER CAME TO STIRRING UP MAGIC WAS AN ACT I USEDTA DO AT BIRTHDAY PARTIES.

EVERYTHING ELSE, I JUST KINDA GOT STIRRED INTO.

I SEE. THEN, IF YOU WISH TO **GO**, I SHAN'T **DETAIN**--

PSSST! HOLD IT A SEC. CAN WE SPEAK **CONFIDENTIALLY?**

OF COURSE. WHAT--?

LISTEN... IF YOU'VE REALLY GOT ALL THIS ABRACADABRA STUFF DOWN **PAT**--

--COULDJA SPARE JUST A **DAB** OF IT TA SEND ME **HOME**?

IT'S... **POSSIBLE.** BUT WHAT OF YOUR **POLITICAL** CAREER-- AND THE WOMAN **BEVERLY**?

SAME ANSWER FOR **BOTH:** I HADDA OCCUPY MY **TIME** ON THIS WORLD OR I'D GO **CRAZY.**

I MEAN-- BEV'S A SWEET KID, BUT--

BUT NOT YOUR **SPECIES.** I UNDERSTAND.

BEHOLD, DUCK--THE **ORB OF AGAMOTTO!**

IN ITS INFINITE LUCID DEPTHS, WE SHALL **LOCATE** YOUR DIMENSIONAL WORLD...

...AND THEN, BY THE POWER OF THE ETERNAL **VISHANTI...**

GULP! SKIP THE SPOOKY **DETAILS**? PLEASE?

AS YOU WISH. DRAW CLOSE *BESIDE* ME.

WE SHALL COMMENCE AT *ONCE*.

PEER WITH ME AS-- EH? THE ORB GROWS *MURKISH!*

SOME-THING IS *AMISS!* BUT WHAT--?

EYES OF OSHTUR!!

"EYES" MY FOOT! THOSE'RE *TENNIS BALLS!!*

CRIPES! EITHER HIS MAGIC WAS OFF THE *MARK*--

--OR WE'RE UNDER ATTACK BY A SORCERER WITH A *HELL* OF A MEAN *SERVE!*

THOKATHOKATHOKA

DEMONS OF THE NORN-- THAT *CLATTER!*

SOUNDS LIKE TWO *STIGAS* IN A GRUDGE MATCH! WAIT HERE!

I'M GONNA DASH *UPSTAIRS* AND--

:OOOMPH:

AAAGH-- I'VE BEEN *STABBED!* WHAT THE--?

A WHITE PICKET FENCE?!

I'VE MET SOME STRANGE *OBSTRUCTIONS* IN MY TIME, BUT THIS IS THE MOST *MUNDANE*--

SUDDENLY--

SMILE, YOU SAPS! COMPANY'S COMING!

KLAAASH

YOO-HOO! *DOC*--?

OH, *SWELL!* HE'S OUT *COLD!*

AN' JUDGIN' FROM THE *HUBBUB* DOWNSTAIRS--

--THE *WINDOW'S* MY BEST BET FOR A QUICK *EXIT!*

HATE T' LEAVE *BEV* IN A SPOT LIKE THIS, BUT--

:WAAAUGH:

NABISCO SHREDDED WHEAT

IT-- IT'S *CARDBOARD!* WE'RE ALL *BOXED-IN!*

PERHAPS... BUT NOT WITHOUT *RECOURSE.*

HUH? WHO *SAID* THAT?! WHERE-- WHAT--

WH-- *AAAUGH*

YOU.

LISTEN CAREFULLY, FOR I CANNOT LONG MAINTAIN THIS FORM WITH NO ACCESS TO THE ENERGY OF MY CONSCIOUS MIND.

YOU MUST RESCUE MY DEFENDERS AND MS. SWITZLER!

I SHALL GUIDE YOUR HAND AND MIND *TELE-PATHICALLY--*

--BUT *YOURS* MUST BE THE INDOMITABLE WILL WHICH *DIRECTS* THE MYSTIC ENERGIES!

AW, NO...!

GO! BE BRAVE! AND MAY THE OMNIPOTENT *OSHTUR* LIGHT YOUR WAY!

UH-HUH. AN' IT BETTER BE WITH A *250-WATT BULB!*

AND SO, ONE MORE TIME, I GO RACING *HEAD-ON* INTO THE SLOBBERING *ORIFICE* OF DEATH--

--LIKE THE *FOOL* I AM.

YOU'VE NO TIME FOR *SELF-REPROACH*, DUCK.

HUH?! WHO *THOUGHT* THAT?

I--DOCTOR STRANGE, THIS IS *TELEPATHY*, HOWARD.

NO *KIDDIN'*? IT'S-- UH-OH.

EMULATE THE *PICTURE* I'M PROJECTING BEFORE YOUR *MIND'S EYE*...

...AND *REPEAT* AFTER ME:

COME YE, *VAPORS OF VALTORR*, YE BILLOWS OF ENCHANTMENT--

--AND WAFT AWAY THESE COMBATANTS 'PON YOUR WIND OF SORROW AND *SILENCE!*

AND WHEN THE VAPORS DISSIPATE...

THEY'RE GONE! BUT WHERE, DOC?

DOC?

DOC??

HE CANNOT ANSWER YOU, FOWL. I'VE SEEN TO THAT...

...JUST AS I SHALL NOW TEND TO YOUR DOOM.

DOC-- BE A PAL-- HELP!!

THINK ALL YOU WISH. IT WILL AVAIL YOU NAUGHT.

"I'VE PLACED A MASK OF CONTAINMENT ABOUT STRANGE'S THOUGHTS.

"HE TRANSFERRED SOME OF HIS ARCANE KNOWL-EDGE TO YOU BEFORE THE STRAPS TIGHTENED--"

--BUT NOWHERE NEAR ENOUGH! YOU'RE GONNA DIE, YOU FEATHERED FOOL!

AND I'M GOING TO BE RICH!!

MEANWHILE, IN **SHEA STADIUM**, THE CROWD ROARS ITS DISAPPROVAL AS THE HOME TEAM **EVACUATES** THE FIELD TO MAKE ROOM FOR-- THE HEROES AND VILLAINS.

WHAK WHAK WHAK

OW! OW! **OW!!**

THUK

DOC MUST'VE ARRANGED THIS-- TO GIVE US SOME ELBOW, KNEE, AND **FIST** ROOM.

SPOING

AND SINCE I'D **HATE** TO SEE HIS SPELL GO TO **WASTE**--

--LET'S SEE IF I CAN SPARE THE ROD AND SPOIL **BEV!**

HEY! STOP WRIGGLING! YOU'LL--

--**FALL**, NIGHT-HAWK?

BUT THAT'S PRECISELY WHAT I **WANT!**

I'M **FREE** NOW-- TO EMPLOY MY **WEAPONRY!**

TH-*THAT* THING?! BUT IT'S *PLASTIC!* IT'S JUST A *TOY!*

TRUE! BUT I AM... THE *SPANKER!* I DON'T *NEED* A REAL GUN--

--TO PISTOL-WHIP YOU!!

FIGHT, YOU MALE CHAUVINIST GARGOYLE! I'M TILLIE THE HUN! I CAN BEAT *ANY* MAN--

--AND IF I *LOSE*, I'LL BE YOUR *BRIDE!*

BUT-- HULK CAN'T SMASH-- *GIRL!*

TOO BAD I'M NOT AS *CHIVALROUS* AS GREENSKIN, HUH? NOW THAT I'VE VIBRATED THAT *SWORD* OUTTA YER HAND--

--YOU'VE LEFT YOUR *GUARD* AS OPEN AS YOUR *MOUTH*, ARCHER!

WHAM

LEARNED YOUR **LESSON** YET, BIRD-MAN? OR--?

KLOP

ACTUALLY, I'M SELF-TAUGHT-- THROUGH BITTER **EXPERIENCE.** CAPISH?

I WARN YOU, BEAST-- **FALL** OR BE MY MATE!

NO!!

*WEARY OF TILLIE'S BLOWS AND **REPELLED** AT THE NOTION OF HER **AFFECTION**, THE GREEN BEHEMOTH SEIZES THE STADIUM'S CAPPET OF **ASTROTURF**, AND...!*

PRETTY **KEEN**, HULK. PRETTY **NEAT-O.**

UNFORTUNATELY, ALL THE MUSCLES IN THE **WORLD** WON'T PREVENT MY SUCKING YOU IN LIKE A HILL OF **GREEN BEANS!**

=HUNNGH= WIND IS **PULLING** AT HULK! **TEARING** AT HULK!

DON'T TAKE IT ***PERSONALLY***, CHUMP. THIS WHOLE ***STADIUM***-- EH?

'SCUSE ME...

...BUT I ***REALLY*** JUST CAN'T LET YOU ***DO*** THIS, Y'KNOW?

*IN A SINGLE, TERRIBLE "**FWOOMP**," THE ALL-CONSUMING VILLAIN IS HIDEOUSLY **SELF-SWALLOWED.***

AAAAAAA

BEV-- ***DON'T!!***

WE ***SPECIALIZE*** IN WEIRD VILLAINS -- BOZOS, BABY DEER, HEADMEN--!

WE ***KNOW***-- IT COULD BE ***DANGEROUS.***

*WHILE, BACK AT THE **SANCTUM**...*

YOU MEAN--SOME-ONE'S ***PAYING*** YOU TO WASTE ***ME***?

BY THE WAY-- I'M ***FREE!***

SO I ***NOTICED***. AND OF ***COURSE***, I'M IN IT FOR THE MONEY!

WHAT ***ELSE*** COULD MOTIVATE A MATERIAL-ISTIC MYSTIC TO SEND A SIX-PLY RADIAL DEATH ROLLING YOUR WAY?

I DUNNO. BUT BY THE SHIELD OF THE SERAPHIM--I'LL ***DEFLECT*** IT!

AND IF THE INFO DOC IMPLANTED IN MY BRAIN WAS ***RIGHT***--

--I CAN ***TRANSFORM*** THAT SHIELD INTO ***STRANDS*** OF ENERGY, AND--!

FOOL!

I CAN WHISK AWAY THE WEB WITH THE ***BROOM OF WHAZOOM***--THE MOST BANAL SPELL OF ***ALL!***

ADMIT IT, DUCK-- I ***OUTCLASS*** YOU!

EXPERTISE, I'LL CONCEDE TO HIM-- BUT CLASS? ***NEVER!***

DOC SHOWED ME ONE LAST BASIC ***MOVE***. IF THIS DOESN'T WRAP IT UP--!

THROWING IN THE ***TOWEL***, EH?

*SO IT SEEMS... UNTIL THE SCARLET FABRIC SNAPS TO **LIFE!***

WHAT THE--?!

IT'S A ***CLOAK OF LEVITATION***, PAL-- SOMETHING ***YOU'D*** NEVER THOUGHT OF, 'CAUSE YOUR ***EYES*** NEVER LEAVE THE ***GROUND!***

BUT ENOUGH ***REPARTEE.***

JUST YOU KEEP ***FLOATIN'*** RIGHT THERE...

WHAP

...WHILE I DELIVER THE ***PUNCH-LINE!***

EXCELLENT, HOWARD-- YOU'VE FREED ME! I'M ON MY WAY DOWN!

YEAH. ME, TOO. TO THE PITS OF EXHAUSTION.

I'M QUITE IMPRESSED, MY FRIEND. YOU SHOW A NATURAL APTITUDE FOR THE MYSTIC ARTS.

IF YOU DESIRE, I COULD TUTOR YOU--

WAAAUGH! NOPE. SORRY. NO DICE. UH-UH.

JUST GET ME OUTTA THIS SMOCK AN' SEND ME HOME!

IN A MOMENT-- AFTER I RECALL OUR COMRADES...

...WHOM, I SENSE, HAVE ALSO MET WITH SUCCESS THIS DAY.

HOME AGAIN, HOME AGAIN, JIGGEDY-JIG.

DOC, I AM NEVER GONNA GET USED TO THIS KIND OF TRAVEL.

NUTS! FORGOT BEV WOULD BE WITH 'EM!

WHAT'M I GONNA TELL 'ER WHEN IT'S TIME FOR ME TA SHOVE OFF?

I KNEW IT! I *KNEW* SHE'D GO LACHRYMOSE ON ME!

OH, DUCKY, I WAS SO *FRIGHTENED* FOR YOU! THESE GOONS SAY THEY WERE *PAID* TO KILL YOU!

AAAH, WE DIDN'T CARE ABOUT THE DUMB *DUCK!* WE JUST WANTED THE METTLE SPHERES ANGST PROMISED US!

HE SAID *STRANGE* HAD THE TOOLS TO MAKE THEM!

METTLE SPHERES? *PROMETHIUM?* YOU TRULY BELIEVED THEY COULD GRANT YOU SOME POWER NOT *ALREADY* WITHIN YOU?

ANGST *DECEIVED* YOU THEN, I FEAR.

PROMETHIUM IS A SORT OF MYSTICAL *PLACEBO.*

AND *SPHERES*, AS THEY SAY, ARE LIKE *SOUL*-- IF ONE *LACKS* IT, NO *EXTERIOR* FORCE MAY *IMPART* IT.

WHICH BRINGS US BACK TO *YOU*, FRIEND DUCK, AND YOUR MYSTIC JOURNEY--

SKIP IT, DOC. JUST LEMME *NAP* AWHILE, OKAY?

THEN YOU CAN LOAN ME A *BUCK* FOR THE JOURNEY BACK *UPTOWN* ON A BUS, HUH?

FIN

HOWARD THE DUCK COVER CAMPAIGN!
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
HOWARD
GIANT-SIZE MAN-THING
GET DOWN, AMERICA
HOWARD
YES, WE KNOW HOWARD DOESN'T APPEAR ON THE GIANT-SIZE MAN-THING COVERS. BUT SINCE THOSE ISSUES ARE NOW A DEFINITE PART OF THE DUCK MYTHOS, WE DIDN'T WANT TO DENY ANYONE A GANDER AT THEM. JUST ONE MORE MIGHTY MARVEL PUBLIC SERVICE.

GET DOWN, AMERICA!
HOWARD THE DUCK CAMPAIGN HEADQUARTERS
GET DOWN, AMERICA!

HOWARD THE DUCK

MARVEL COMICS GROUP™

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

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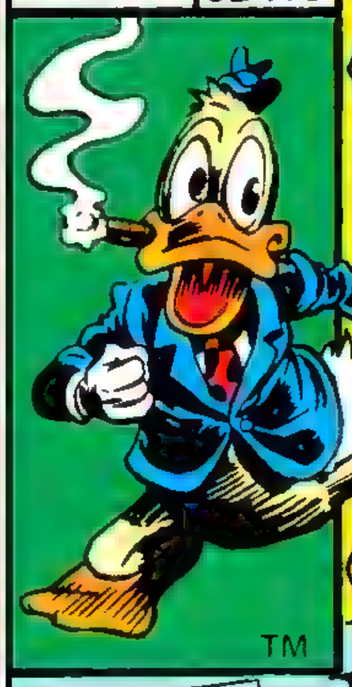
TRAPPED IN A WORLD HE NEVER MADE!

HOWARD THE DUCK™



FINAL ★★★★

DAILY BUGLE

THE PICTURE NEWSPAPER

New York, N.Y. August 21, 1

WEATHER: Mostly sunny, breezy, warm.

Vol. 51. No. 49

HOWARD FOR PREZ

HOWARD IN '76

GET DOWN AMER

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City, Aug. 17
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lican Nation
tomorrow:
(EDT) — Co
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...rman Rep. John J
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National Committee
8:48 p.m — Speec
Jacob K. Javits of
9 p.m. — Roll call o
nominations for P
9:20 p.m. — Nomi
President, followe
demonstrations.
9:40 p.m. (appr
Roll call on the
nomination.

...6-C—that
...ord to name
...r the vice presi-
...on at 9 a.m. to-
...urs before the
...the presi-

Carter Yells Fowl

UPI photo

Even before the climactic rule fight, the delegates showed the ...were ready for a Pier 6 braw ...onstration for an

"Do ... leader ... next ... whom ... ago? ... the ... con... say ... where he intends to steer ship of state?"

of the National Federatic Republican Women, was a podium. The demonstr drowned out the last five mi of Mrs. Hutar's speech, whic not even deal with the pro rule.

Then, just before Conn speech, the appearance of lady Betty Ford, daughter S and son Steve in the VIP se touched off a 10-minute de stration, with Ford and Re forces waving banners and sl ing slogans at each other. A Connally's speech, the chan "Rea-gan, Rea-gan, Rea-g again boomed from the galle and another shouting match under way.

Connally's speech was wel ceived by the delegates, man whom believe that the one- ... Johnson protege —

Assassination Attempt Defended By Gunman

UPI Telep

"Thought He Was In Season," Explains Prisoner

...$165,000 study, financed by the federal Urban Mass ...and the Ford and Rockefeller Founda- ...t service and lower fares ...recouped. It

...e House Press Secretar ...Nessen said that For ...t Baker's keynote speec ...ight was "a good, stron ...good presentatic ...

...The ...e ...ake ...ov' ...ad ...per ...Ford. ...

Ron MacMahan, said, ...en ...or reported to the Pres dent th ...undergone treatme

From the time of his hatching, he was...different. A potentially brilliant scholar who dreaded the structured environment of school, he educated himself in the streets, taking whatever work was available, formulating his philosophy of self from what he learned of the world about him. And then the Cosmic Axis shifted...and that world *changed.* Suddenly, he was stranded in a universe he could not fathom. Without warning, he became a strange fowl in an even stranger land.

Stan Lee PRESENTS: HOWARD THE DUCK!™

STEVE GERBER WRITER * GENE COLAN ARTIST * STEVE LEIALOHA INKER * I. WATANABE LETTERER * JAN COHEN COLORIST * ARCHIE GOODWIN EDITOR

OPEN SEASON!

A HANDSHAKE, A TIP OF THE HAT, AND **HOWARD THE DUCK** BIDS FAREWELL TO **DR. STRANGE*** AND TO **INNOCENCE**--AS HE WADDLES BLINDLY INTO THE WORLD OF HARSH POLITICAL REALITY.

IT'S A REALITY CIRCUMSCRIBED BY THE VIEW THROUGH A **TELESCOPIC SIGHT**, AN EXISTENCE LED AT THE INTERSECTION OF **CROSSHAIRS**.

FOR ALONG WITH POWER, RICHES, FAME, AND FREE FRANKING PRIVILEGES--- THE MAN OR FOWL WHO SEEKS THE **WHITE HOUSE** ALSO COURTS **DEATH**. (SO WHAT ELSE IS NEW?)

*THEY MET IN THE **HTD TREASURY EDITION**.--ARCH.

BUT **WHY** COULDN'T WE ACCEPT DOC'S INVITATION TO SPEND THE NIGHT?

DO YOU **WANNA** SLEEP IN CENTRAL PARK?

WE'RE **BROKE**, DUCKY. WE HAVEN'T HEARD FROM THE **PARTY** SINCE THE CONVENTION.

WE DON'T EVEN KNOW IF YOU'RE STILL A **CANDIDA--**

BLAM

HOWARD? WHAT **WAS** THAT?

HOWARD??

OH! **THERE** YOU ARE!

BUT WHO'S THAT?

JUST SOME SLOB WHO FELL OFF THE **ROOF**, BEY. C'MON!

BUT HOWARD, HE NEEDS **HELP**. I THINK HE'S **DEAD**!

YEAH. PROB'LY!

I THINK SOMEBODY PUT A **BULLET** RIGHT **THROUGH** HIM!

BUT WHO? WHY?

I DON'T KNOW, AND I DON'T **CARE**.

WHOEVER OLE DEADEYE WAS, HE'S GETTIN' **AWAY--**

--HEADING **EAST** OVER THE ROOFTOPS! SO **GUESS** WHAT DIRECTION **WE'RE** TAKING?

IT STARTS WITH "W".

*LEAPING FROM PARAPET TO PARAPET PERIPATETICALLY, THE DARING ASSASSIN **FLEES** THE SCENE.*

BUT HIS FLIGHT ENCOUNTERS **TURBULENCE** IN A NEARBY **ALLEY...**

WHAT THE--?!

ANOTHER HUMAN AMMUNITION DEPOT.

SO! A SET-UP, HUH?

WELL, YOU'RE NOT RUNNIN' ME IN, YA DIRTY ROTTEN--

HEY! YOU'RE NOT A **COP!** YOU'RE--!

AND **YOU'RE--!**

ARE **YOU** HERE TA KILL 'IM, TOO?

YOU KIDDIN'? EVERY HIT MAN IN THE **CITY'S** AFTER THAT BIRD!

WELL! IF COMPETITION'S **THAT** STIFF--COUNT ME **OUT!** EVEN **10 MILLION** AIN'T WORTH **DYIN'** FOR.

RIGHT ON, MAN. **SEE** YA!

BLAM

BAM

NOT IF I SEE YOU FIRST!!

WHY YOU--!!

HOWARD, YOU DON'T SUPPOSE-- WITH YOU RUNNING FOR **PRESIDENT** AND ALL--I MEAN, COULD THEY BE--

--SHOOTING AT **US?**

IT **IS** POSSIBLE, BEV.

SUDDENLY, FROM AROUND THE CORNER... THE SCREECH OF TIRES, THE ROAR OF A POWERFUL **ROLLS** ENGINE...

ONE WAY

DC

D★G

...AND THE FAMILIAR, IF ABOMINABLE, SIGHT OF COUNTRY SINGER **DREYFUSS GULTCH'S** LIMOUSINE.

HURRY, Y'ALL! MUH BULLET-PROOF GLASS WILL **PROTECT** YA!

IT'S BEEN **TESTED** BY NORTH CAROLINA WOMEN!

SCRREE

EE

CH

THE DOOR SLAMS SHUT... AND CHRISTOPHER STREET BECOMES A **WAR ZONE!** ASSASSINS WHO MIGHT OTHERWISE HAVE WAITED THEIR **TURNS** EMERGE, GUNS BLAZING, FROM EVERY NOOK, CRANNY, AND **MANHOLE!**

WHERE'D YA' ALL RUN **OFF** TO, HOWIE? IT AIN'T **SAFE** FOR YA TO TO BE WALKIN' THE STREETS!

BRRRP

PINNNG

POW POW

BAM

YEAH. I GATHERED. GOT ANY SPARE HYPOTHESES **WHY?**

SHORE. I KNOW WHY! IT'S THEM WILD-EYED POLITICAL **PROMISES** YOU BEEN MAKIN'!

WHAT PROMISES?! I HAVEN'T--

NAW, BUT YOUR **AD AGENCY** HAS. C'MON. THEIR OFFICE IS RIGHT UPSTAIRS.

IT'S TIME YOU **MET** 'EM.

DG

YEAH. I'D SAY **SO.**

UPSTAIRS...

WOW. HEY, DUCKY, I'M IMPRESSED.

I USED TO THINK I WAS ALL THINGS TO ALL MEN...BUT EVEN IN MY DEVIL-MAY-CARE DAYS, I COULDN'T BEAT THIS!

WARD-PRE

STAND UP, AMERICA— VOTE HOWARD THE DUCK IN '76

I DON'T BELIEVE IT.

HOWARD FOR PRESIDENT

WHOSE WARPED MIND IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS HOKUM?

G. Q. STUDLEY HIMSELF ENGINEERED THE CAMPAIGN, HOWIE. HE'S FAMOUS FOR--

G. Q. STUDLEY ASSOC.

--HUCKSTERISM, PROBABLY. I WANNA TALK TO THIS GUY!

HOWEVER...

I'M SO SORRY.

HE'S IN CONFERENCE JUST NOW...ABOUT THE DUCK CAMPAIGN. WON'T YOU TAKE A SEAT?

WAAAUGH! LADY, I'M THE BLASTED DUCK!!

I'M THE CANDIDATE! I WANT SOME SAY IN WHAT I SAY, Y'KNOW?

GIMME THAT SWITCH-BOARD!!

BOSS! MR. STUDLEY! OH, DARLING--HELP ME!

MAD DUCK! MAD DUCK!

WELL, WELL... COME OUT OF SECLUSION AT LAST! ALL RIGHT, MEN--

--TAKE HIM!

RIGHT, MR. STUDLEY.

NOW, NOW...COME ALONG. IT'S FOR YOUR OWN GOOD. YOU'LL SEE.

WAIT! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!

OUR JOB, LADY. DON'T INTERFERE.

YOU! YOU'RE IN CHARGE HERE! WHERE ARE THEY TAKING HIM?!

THUMP

HE COMMITTED HIMSELF, MS. SWITZLER--

--TO WINNING THIS ELECTION, I MEAN. NOW IT'S MY JOB--AND THAT OF OUR MAKE-UP MEN--

--TO INSURE HE FULFILLS THAT COMMITMENT, OR DIES TRYING.

FOR THAT, WE NEED HIS--AND YOUR--TOTAL CO-OPERATION.

NOT THAT WE HAVEN'T MADE REMARKABLE STRIDES ALREADY. OF THE THREE MAJOR CANDIDATES--

--HOWARD'S ASSASSINATION QUOTIENT IS BY FAR THE HIGHEST--AN UNPRECEDENTED 7.97.

HTD FORD CARTER

TH-THAT'S GOOD??

GOOD? IT'S **GREAT!**

IT MEANS PEOPLE **CARE!**

AND HERE'S EVERY **SYLLABLE** HOWARD WILL UTTER WITHIN EARSHOT OF A REPORTER BETWEEN NOW AND NOVEMBER--AS COMPILED BY OUR EXPERT **EQUIVOCATEURS.**

BUT--HOW DO YOUR **SPEECHWRITERS** KNOW WHAT HOWARD THINKS ABOUT--

TODAY'S CANDIDATE DOESN'T **THINK,** MS. SWITZLER. HE **RECITES**--

--NICE, SAFE, PRE-TESTED BROMIDIC BOMBASTS LIKE **THIS:**

=AHEM=

"I'M **TIRED** OF HEARING PEOPLE RUN DOWN THIS COUNTRY! SURE, WE'VE GOT **PROBLEMS**--

"--POLLUTION, INFLATION, RECESSION, CRIME, PERVASIVE MORAL DECAY--JUST TO NAME A **FEW.**

"BUT WHAT NATION **DOESN'T** HAVE ITS TROUBLES?"

ARE YOU **SERIOUS?** YOU EXPECT **HOWARD** TO SPOUT THAT STUFF?

WITH A **STRAIGHT FACE?!**

EH? WHATEVER DO YOU ME--

WAAAUGH

WE HADDA WORK **FAST,** MR. STUDLEY. HE WOULDN'T STOP **SQUIRMIN!** BUT--

"BUT" **NOTHING!** HE'S **MAGNIFICENT!!**

DISTINGUISHED. SUBTLE. RAZOR-SHARP LINES--YET TASTEFULLY **UNDERSTATED.**

AND EXUDING UNMISTAKABLE ***SEX APPEAL!*** AND LORD A'MIGHTY, THAT ***WINNING SMILE!!***

YEAH? WELL, IF YA ***LIKE*** IT SO MUCH--

CHOMP

--YA CAN KEEP IT, YA POMPOUS, PRESUMPTUOUS, PLASTICIZED FASHION PLATE!

STOP!!

YOU'RE COMMITTING POLITICAL ***SUICIDE!***

YOU CAN'T WADDLE OUT ON US! WHO'LL ***PACKAGE*** YOU?!

YOU'RE A THIRD-PARTY CANDIDATE AND A ***DUCK!***

YOU EXPECT TO SURMOUNT THOSE IMAGE PROBLEMS ***ALONE?!***

NYAAH

JUST ***WATCH*** ME, LAUGHING BOY!

OUTSIDE...

YOU FIGGER ***EVERY*** CANDIDATE GOES THRU THIS DEBASEMENT?

NAH. BY THE TIME MOST OF 'EM GET ***THIS*** FAR, HUMILIATING COMPROMISE COMES ***EASY.***

WHAT ***ARE*** YOU GONNA DO ABOUT AN ***AD REP,*** THOUGH?

WE'LL PICK OUR ***OWN***--THE SCIENTIFIC WAY!

AT ***RANDOM***-- FROM THE ***YELLOW PAGES!***

TELEPH

AH-***HA!***

NOW ***THAT'S*** OUR KINDA PEOPLE!

WELL...***YOUR*** KIND, ANYWAY.

MAD GENIUS ASS ATES

H AVENUE OOM 806...

CAMPAIGN LOG: SEPTEMBER

AND NOW THE **QBS** EVENING NEWS WITH **WALTER KLONDIKE:**

"GOOD MORNING. ONE MONTH AGO, MOST AMERICANS HAD NEVER HEARD OF **MAD GENIUS ASSOCIATES**--OR THEIR MOST UNUSUAL **CLIENT.** BUT FOR THE PAST THIRTY DAYS...

"...THE ATTENTION OF THE ELECTORATE HAS BEEN **RIVETED** ON THAT DIMINUTIVE FIGURE, PERHAPS THE MOST **EXTRAORDINARY** NEW FACE IN POLITICS.

"HIS CAMPAIGN BEGAN INAUSPICIOUSLY ENOUGH--JUST A **SOAPBOX** AND PLAIN TALK. YET HIS DEMEANOR, HIS RAW, THROATY VOICE, HIS RELENTLESS **CANDOR** SET HIM APART AT ONCE.

"IN THE WORDS OF ONE ASTONISHED LISTENER: 'MY GOD, HE'S TELLING THE **TRUTH!** HE'LL BE **DEAD** IN A WEEK!'

"WHY A DUCK?" YOU ASK! I SAY, WHY **NOT** A DUCK? YOU'VE HAD ***TURKEYS*** RUNNING THIS COUNTRY FOR 200 YEARS!

I'M GONNA RUN AN ***ACTIVIST*** CAMPAIGN! EVEN THE BOZOS WHO JUST LOOK AT THE ***PICTURES*** WILL WILL KNOW WHAT I STAND FOR!

"TO THE SURPRISE OF A JADED CITIZENRY, THIS CURIOUS LITTLE CREATURE **KEPT** HIS PROMISE--BEGINNING WITH A VISUAL STATEMENT ON **POLLUTION.**

"FROM ONE SQUARE BLOCK IN NEW YORK, **HTD** COLLECTED A **STEAM-SHOVELFUL** OF NON-RETURNABLE CONTAINERS--AND BROUGHT THEM HOME TO ROOST ON THE MANUFACTURER'S IMMACULATE **INDUSTRIAL MALL.**

PRODIGAL CAN CO. INDUSTRIAL PARK

"ON **BUSING:** 'SEND THE **PARENTS** FOR A RIDE! IF THEY STOPPED **YELLING,** MAYBE THE KIDS COULD HEAR THEIR TEACHERS!'

SCHOOL BU

UNLAWFUL TO PA

"'AS IT IS, ALL THEY'RE LEARNING IS **ARSON** AND **BAD MANNERS!**

"ON THE **MILITARY BUDGET:** 'YOU GUYS WANT BIGGER, DEADLIER, MORE EXPENSIVE WEAPONS? **SWELL!** BUT WE GOTTA CUT **SOMETHING!**'

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

FORT NEANDERTHAL

NO TRESSPASSING

VIOLATORS WILL BE S

"'HOW 'BOUT **HOUSING?** YOU CAN **ROUGH** IT--IN **CAVES.** IT'LL SUIT YOUR **TEMPERAMENT!**'

"NONE OF THOSE POSITIONS PROVED POPULAR, HOWEVER, WITH VARIOUS POWERFUL **INTEREST GROUPS**--OR WITH THE DUCK'S **OPPONENTS.**

OUR FOWL MAY FIND THAT EVEN FORTH-RIGHTNESS, CARRIED TO ITS ***EXTREME***, MAY BE DELETERIOUS IN THE LONG VIEW.

MAYBE ***NOT***, THOUGH.

I, UH, AM NOT QUITE CERTAIN HOW TO INTERPRET OR RESPOND TO THIS DUCK'S THEATRICS. BUT IF IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE ***FUNNY***, I DON'T GET THE JOKE.

IS IT ***DIRTY***, OR WHAT?

"BUT MILLIONS OF AMERICANS **DO** UNDERSTAND AND HAVE RE-SPONDED. AND THEY'RE WEARING THIS NOW-FAMOUS **BUTTON** TO PROVE IT.

★GET DOWN, AMERICA!★'76 IN VOTE HOWARD THE DUCK

"NOW THE WORLD WONDERS--CAN HE **WIN?** WILL HE **LIVE** LONG ENOUGH TO WIN?

"ACCORDING TO THE POLLS, SOME 48% OF THE POPULATION WANT HIM **DEAD**--30% INTEND TO GIVE HIM THEIR **VOTE**--AND 22% ARE ***UNDECIDED.***

"BY THE SIMPLE ACT OF TELLING THE TRUTH AS HE SEES IT, HOWARD THE DUCK HAS MANAGED TO **ANTAGONIZE** ALMOST EVERY-BODY.

"AND **THAT'S** THE WAY IT IS--TAKE IT OR LEAVE IT."

INTER-LUDE

A CHILL OCTOBER MORN IN CENTRAL PARK!

C'MON, BEV-- ***THINK!*** THAT'S WHY YOU RISKED DEATH TO WALK AROUND HERE ALL NIGHT!

I FEEL LIKE I WANNA TAKE OFF ALL MY CLOTHES AND GET ***ARRESTED!***

JEEZ--HEY, BRAIN, WHERE ***ARE*** YA, GUY? WHERE ARE ALL THOSE ***THOUGHTS*** I WANTED TO BE ***ALONE*** WITH, HUH?

LIFE USEDTA BE SO ***SIMPLE***--BEFORE POLITICS, BEFORE FAME, BEFORE--!

DUCKS USEDTA BE SO SIMPLE! JEEZ!

NOW ALL I CAN THINK ABOUT ARE THE ***POLLS,*** THE ***GNP,*** THE RATE OF INFLATION, THE--ULP!

FREEZE, CHARLIE. I TOOK PRIVATE LESSONS FROM ***DIANA RIGG!***

S-SORRY! I DIDN'T MEAN TO ***STARTLE*** YOU!

I--JUST WANTED TO FEED THE ***DUCKS***--AN' ***THINK,*** Y'KNOW? I COME HERE A LOT.

S-SURE. I JUST KINDA-- OVER-REACTED.

WELL--SEE YA. HAVE FUN WITH THE DUCKS.

OH, I ***WILL.*** I REALLY ***LOVE*** DUCKS. IN FACT--

WAAAUGH

--I MAKE IT A POINT TO ***THROTTLE*** ONE EVERY DAY!

CAMPAIGN LOG: NOVEMBER

"THAT'S WHY WE ASKED FOR THIS MEETING AT MR. GULTCH'S **RANCH.**

DIRTY GULTCH

"AS YOU KNOW WE REPRESENT SOME VERY **POWERFUL** INTERESTS IN THIS COUNTRY.

"AND WE WANT YOU TO KNOW, MR. DUCK, WE'RE BEHIND YOU A **THOUSAND PER CENT.**"

IS THIS **REALLY** MINK--?!

WE CAN MAKE MAKE IT, EH--WORTH YOUR **WHILE** TO BE SUPPORTIVE OF **US,** TOO.

IN OTHER WORDS, YOU YO-YO'S WANNA DO **BUSINESS.**

I VETO A BILL--THEN BILL **YOU** FOR A COUPLE HUNDRED **GRAND,** RIGHT?

WELL OF COURSE, THERE'S NO NEED TO TALK **FIGURES** JUST YET...!

PSSST

I S'POZE YOU KNOW I'VE BEEN RUNNING AS A *PEOPLE'S* CANDIDATE...?

CLEAN GOVERNMENT WITH NO WAXY YELLOW BUILD-UP AN' ALL THAT...?

GOTTA HAVE A LINE TO GET *ELECTED*, I GUESS...!

WELL, S'POZE I TOLDJA I DON'T *CARE* IF I'M ELECTED?

THAT I'D RATHER *LOSE* THAN SELL OUT TO YOU OILY GUYS WITH STEEL BRAINS AND EXHAUST PIPE MOUTHS? *HUH?*

IN *THAT* CASE, MR. DUCK...

...WE HAVE *NOTHING* MORE TO DISCUSS.

YOU'LL HAVETA KISS A LOT OF *BABIES* TO COUNTERVAIL THE *DAMAGE* YOU'VE DONE TO YOURSELF.

AND I HAVETA BUY MY OWN *WINTER COAT*, TOO, HUH?

THE MANGY MAGNATES WHO RULE THE *WORLD!*

THOSE GUYS *KILL* ME!

YUP, HOWIE-- THEY JUST *MIGHT.*

SLAM

NOT WITHOUT AN *APPOINTMENT.* OUR SCHEDULE'S *FULL* BETWEEN NOW AND *ELECTION DAY.*

ANOTHER WEEK OF *BARNSTORMING*--THEN BACK TO NEW YORK FOR YOUR LAST NATIONALLY TELEVISED *PRESS CONFERENCE.*

PARTIAL TRANSCRIPT OF NATIONALLY TELEVISED PRESS CONFERENCE:
Hotel Rykrisp, New York City, November 1, 1976

HOWARD: Ladies an' germs, I'll keep my opening smart remarks brief. I didn't particularly wanna be president of this coast-to-coast funny farm you hairless apes have set up. When they asked me to run, I'd just been hit on the head an' didn't really understand what I was agreein' to. But I've reached the conclusion that most o' the American public is in the same condition most o' the time, so just maybe I'm the ideal candidate. You meatbrains willingly subject yourselves to more abuse, physical and psychological, than any nation in history! You allow your eyes and lungs to be eaten away by pollution. You fill your digestive tracts with chemicals. Your ears are barraged by the sounds of jackhammer progress. All this while politicians and Madison Avenue bang away at your minds. You all wanna be happy an' secure, yet you open yourselves to the constant tension an' pressure of a society that claims to be free, but refuses to let you make a move without first filing forms in triplicate. You wonder why you got violence? Why your young are either dissident, empty-headed, or drugged into a stupor? It's because you've fashioned an emotionally and intellectually sterile culture, that's why! If an individual is unwilling to spend his life in the plodding pursuit of possessions, there's nothing for 'im to *do!* The United States is one big dateless Saturday night! If I'm elected, I'm gonna inject a little *life* back into you anesthetized Americans! For four years, this country's gonna get down an' boogie, see?! Ungawa! Okay! Now anybody got any brilliant questions?

(Stunned silence, interrupted only by an occasional nervous cough; then...)

RAMSEY KLEP (Devil's Tongue, N.M., *Daily Lick)*: Mr. Duck, which do you favor--- conditional amnesty or a blanket pardon for Vietnam draft evaders?

HOWARD: Neither. I favor education.

KLEP: Beg pardon?

HOWARD: Look, as nearly as I can tell, everybody is still reacting on this question with his gut, not his head. It's still "my country right or wrong" versus "make love not war". I figure the answer is a debate, on television, between proponents of each position. The government would buy time on all three networks and the yelling could go on for days. Then, the country could decide in a national referendum, based on each individual's judgment of the facts. Revolutionary, huh? Next!

DUNSTAN QUOBROX (Lima, OH., *Daily Bean*): What's your opinion of the recent Washington scandals? Should elected officials be held accountable for their private morality?

HOWARD: Nah. As long as the taxpayers aren't financin' their little romps, senators an' congressmen deserve to have a little fun. Heck, we oughtta be heartened to know some o' those old prunes have still got it in 'em.

SAM QUENTIN (Dubious, NJ, *Daily Dunno)*; How do you feel, sir, about violence in movies, television programs, and comic books?

HOWARD: I'm all for it.

QUENTIN: What?

HOWARD: As long as it's never presented as cathartic—as a release, as a solution. A kid oughtta know what he's gettin' into if he's contemplatin' stabbing or shootin' somebody. It's messy. The blood gets all over the floor. It smells bad. It's ugly to look at. I think violence should be presented honestly—as disgustingly and offensively as possible. There's no such thing as tasteful violence.

(Beverly Switzler leaps up on the table, does a little dance, blows a whistle, and chirps "Th-th-that's all, folks!" into a microphone. The auditorium explodes in applause, and the press conference concludes.)

OUTSIDE...

SMILE, MR. DUCK! YOU LOOK LIKE A WINNER!

OKAY--BUT NO MORE QUESTIONS. I'M POOPED!

BUT YOU'LL PUCKER UP FOR MY BABY-DOLL, WON'T YOU?

I BOUGHT HER FOR $5.95 ON SALE. HER NAME IS--

CLUMP

--MUNITIONS!

AND SHE LOVES YOU TO BITS, MR. DUCK-- TO BITS!!

BLAM

WAAUGH

WHUMP

GREER CONSTRUC

SNNAP

OH, LOOK. A GIRDER SEEMS TO BE FALLING.

HUH...?

HOWARD-- LOOK OUT!!

WAAAUK

CRRASH

DON'T YOU SEE WHAT'S HAPPENING? WE'RE RUNNING A GAUNTLET OF SPECIAL INTERESTS!!

THIS IS THEIR LAST-DITCH EFFORT TO BUMP YOU OFF! THEY'RE SO DESPERATE-- THEY DON'T CARE WHO SEES, WHO KNOWS--!

WE'VE GOTTA GET OUTTA H--

WAIT-- WHAT'S THAT?

CRRASH

A DRIVER-LESS CAR! OH, JEEZ,- WE'RE DOOMED!

UH-UH! ON MY SIGNAL--

CRRASH

--JUMP!!

WE'LL RIDE IT RIGHT THROUGH THE BARRICADES!!

CRRASH

W-WE'RE STILL ALIVE! WE'VE SURVIVED THREE MAJOR INDUSTRIES!

CAN I HELP YA'S--?

FILL 'ER UP??

I HEAR YOU LIKE *CIGARS*, DUCK. HOW 'BOUT A *LIGHT?*

SORRY. I *NEVER* ACCEPT A LIGHT FROM A TURKEY WITH *TRAPPED GAS!*

÷MMNNGH÷

HURRY, DUCKY-- OUR *HOTEL'S* JUST AROUND THE CORNER!

SOON...

PRESS WAS *HARD* ON YA, HUH? WELL, HATE TA *TELL* YA--

--BUT THERE'S *MORE* BAD NEWS. TAKE A GANDER AT *THIS,* DUCK!

OH, *NO!* HOW--HOW *COULD* THEY--?!

SCANDAL PLUCKS DUCK

POLLSTERS SAY HE'S FINISHED!

÷WAAAUGH÷ *NO!* IT'S A PHONY!! A *FRAME-UP!!*

AN' WE'RE *SUNK*...IN A BATHTUB.

NEXT ⟩ THE **BITE** OF THE **BEAVER!** CHOMP!

HOWARD THE DUCK

30¢ CC

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TRAPPED IN A WORLD HE NEVER MADE!

HOWARD THE DUCK

TM

THUNDER OVER NIAGRA FALLS!

WHEN BITES THE BEAVER!

From the time of his hatching, he was...different. A potentially brilliant scholar who dreaded the structured environment of school, he educated himself in the streets, taking whatever work was available, formulating his philosophy of self from what he learned of the world about him. And then the Cosmic Axis shifted...and that world *changed*. Suddenly, he was stranded in a universe he could not fathom. Without warning, he became a strange fowl in an even stranger land.

Stan Lee PRESENTS: HOWARD THE DUCK!™

STEVE GERBER WRITER / EDITOR / GENE COLAN ARTIST / STEVE LEIALOHA INKER / JOHN COSTANZA, letterer, MICHELE WOLFMAN, colorist

NOVEMBER 3, 1976: THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IS PAST, AND YESTERDAY'S PAPERS TELL THE TALE-- THE ONLY PART THAT MATTERS, ANYWAY.

HTD L-O-S-T.

AND HE LOST BIG!

DAILY BUGLE — FINAL

NEW YORK, TUESDAY, NOV. 2, 1976, 63rd YEAR

A Tight Family ? P. 6 NIGHT OWL

SCANDAL PLUCKS DUCK

PART OF THE PLOT TO KEEP US BACK-WARD, EH?

BUT YOU'RE A U.S. CITIZEN... THEY WOULD'VE TOLD YOU. WHAT WAS THE OUTCOME OF THE ELECTION?

EXCELLENT, MON AMI-- TRES NIFTY! A MOST EXTRAORDINARY FEAT OF PUBLIC RELATIONS-- FOR A BELLBOY.

HOWEVER, AS YOU KNOW, WE RECEIVE YOUR NEWS ON A DELAY UP HERE.

POLLSTERS SAY HE'S FINISHE

PATTY HEARST-- GIRL OR AUTOMOBILE? SEE PG. 12

GARINE-- OLEO OR BUST? SEE PG. 12

L--EX-PREXY OR LIVE BAIT? SEE PG. 12

I TOLD YOU-- HOWARD DIDN'T *WIN*. EVEN BACK HOME, NOBODY CARES WHO *DID*.

NOW WHEN DO I GET MY *MONEY?*

=SIGH= I THOUGHT WE'D *SETTLED* THAT. YOU DID IT ALL FOR *AMERICA*, NON?

AND TO AVENGE YOUR BELOVED *BROTHER*?

OH--OH, *YEAH!* I ALMOST FORGOT! MY BROTHER *TOMMY!* THE ONLY AMERICAN KILLED IN VIETNAM--

--BY A *DUCK!*

HE WAS AN *ANTI-AIRCRAFT* GUNNER, TOMMY WAS-- BRAVEST MAN I EVER KNEW!

HE SIGHTED A CHARLIE *MIG* OVER-HEAD!

HE *FIRED!!*

BUT HE *MISSED*--

--AND HIT A *WILD DUCK* INSTEAD!

DOWN SPUN THE DIRTY COMMIE FOWL--

--IN A SPECTACULAR *DEATH-DIVE* FROM HUNDREDS OF FEET IN THE AIR--

--ONLY TO LAND ON A VIETCONG *LAND MINE* SIX INCHES FROM TOMMY'S *FACE!*

BOOM!

I'VE *HATED* DUCKS EVER SINCE! TO LET ONE BE ELECTED PRESIDENT OF THE COUNTRY TOMMY *DIED* FOR--!

YEAH, THAT'S WHY *I* DID IT! BUT WHAT ABOUT *YOU*? YOU'RE NOT AN AMERICAN! WHY'D *YOU* DO IT?

OH, JUST FOR *GIGGLES.*

HEE. HEE. HEE.

NEW YORK: AMID THE RUBBLE OF HTD CAMPAIGN HQ, THE DUCK, HIS COMPANION BEVERLY SWITZLER, AND COUNTRY WESTERN SINGER DREYFUSS GULTCH PONDER THE EXISTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES OF COAST-TO-COAST PUBLIC HUMILIATION.

HOWARD THE DUCK

VOTE HOWARD

AAAH--WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE? I MEAN, IT'S NOT LIKE I THIRSTED AFTER THE PRESIDENCY!

I JUST WANTED A PROJECT TO OCCUPY MY TIME 'TIL NOVEMBER!

WELL, NOVEMBER'S HERE, DUCKY--AND AS USUAL, YOU'RE STILL THINKING ONLY OF YOURSELF!

GET DOWN AMERICA · VOTE HOWARD

WHAT ABOUT MY REPUTATION? DO YOU KNOW HOW LONG AND HARD I WORKED TO CONVINCE EVERYBODY IN CLEVELAND I WAS A GOOD GIRL??

DOWN AMERICA

HOWARD FOR P

AWRIGHT, Y'ALL--QUIT FANNIN' THE BREEZE AN' LISTEN TA SOME *SENSE!*

AH' JEST GOT OFF THE PHONE WITH A PAL O' MINE AT *CIA!*

HE SAYS THAR'S MORE HERE 'N MEETS THE *EYE!* THET PHOTO'S QUEER AS A *THREE-DOLLAR BILL!*

:WAAUGH:

WE *KNOW* IT'S A PHONY, YA TWO-BIT TINHORN TROUBADOUR!! BEV AN' I *NEVER* BATHE TOGETHER!

SHE *HATES* THE SMELL OF WET FEATHERS!!

WHAT CHANGED THEIR *MINDS*-- NOW THAT I'M BRANDED NATION-WIDE AS A SHAMELESS *HUSSY?*

THAR WAS NO *WATER FAUCET* ON EITHER END O' THE *TUB!*

THEY REALIZED IT HADDA BE HALVES O' *TWO* PIX PASTED TOGETHER!

AN' THET AIN'T THE *HALF* OF IT, HOWIE--

MUH BUDDY FIGGERS YO'RE THE VICTIM OF AN *INTERNATIONAL INTRIGUE!* THET PHOTO WAS TRACED TO A *FOREIGN POWER!*

SMACK

COME AGAIN?

WHO?? I DEMAND TO KNOW WHAT COUNTRY WRECKED MY *LIFE!!*

WAS IT *RUSSIA*-- RED CHINA--?

NOPE.

CANADA.

CANADA?!?

'COURSE, THE INTELLIGENCE BOYS WON'T INVESTIGATE. THEY'RE *GLAD* Y'ALL LOST! BUT--

EXIT

IT'S OKAY, GULTCH. TELL 'EM I *APPRECIATE* THEIR CANDOR --*AND* THEIR UTTER LUNACY.

SEE YA.

WHOA *UP*, BOY! WHAR'S YORE *CONSCIENCE* FLOWN?

THIS BLAMED *SCANDAL* DISCREDITS THE WHOLE ALL-NIGHT PARTY-- NOT JES' *YOU!*

DON'T FORGET ME! *I'M* TAINTED, TOO!

AW, C'MON-- LAY *OFF*, WILLYA?!

WHADDAYA THINK--THE PAPERS'LL *RETRACT* THAT PHOTO AN' WE'LL HOLD THE ELECTION *AGAIN?!*

YUP--AN' *NOPE.*

SEE, WE FIGGER THE ONLY SKUNK COULDA *TOOK* THEM PICTURES WAS THE *BELLBOY* AT YORE HOTEL.

AN' MUH *CIA* PARD TELLS ME HE FLED THE COUNTRY-- AN' LEFT A FORWARDIN' ADDRESS IN *ONTARIO.*

GULTCH--PEOPLE DON'T *FLEE* AND LEAVE A *FORWARDING ADDRESS!!*

MEBBE *NOT*-- BUT THE PARTY FIGGERS IT'S WORTH CHECKIN' OUT.

AN' HERE'S YORE *AIRLINE TICKETS* TO PROVE IT!

YOU WANT *ME* TO INVESTIGATE IT-- *PERSONALLY?*

SHORE *'NUFF!* WE'LL ANNOUNCE TO THE *WORLD* YO'RE FLYIN' NORTH TA CLEAR YORE *NAME!* IT'LL MAKE *HEADLINES!*

AN' WHEN YA ALL RETURN, THE CONQUERIN' *HERO*-- WELL, BY 1980-- YOU COULD BE IN THE RUNNIN' AGAIN, BOY!

HMMM... IT'D PROBABLY SQUARE ME WITH MY *PARENTS,* TOO.

OVER MY DEAD *BODY.*

I'VE BLED *ENOUGH* FOR THE CAUSE.

WELL, I'M NOT *READY* TO JOIN THE WADDLING WOUNDED, HOWARD! MY METICULOUSLY FABRICATED *REP* /S AT STAKE!

EITHER WE BOARD THAT PLANE *TOGETHER* -- OR I NEVER *SPEAK* TO YOU AGAIN!

WHAT'LL IT *BE??*

TWO NIGHTS LATER...

I JUST DON'T SEE HOW YOU COULD MISPLACE YOUR TOOTH-BRUSH, YOUR CIGARS, AND YOUR HAT...!

WE ALMOST MISSED THE PLANE!

FLY-BY-NIGHT AIRWAYS

YEAH. HORRORS.

BUT IT LOOKS LIKE WE'RE RIGHT ON TIME.

WE HELD THE FLIGHT JUST FOR YOU, MA'AM.

SLAM

WELCOME ABOARD-- SUCKERS!!

THE RICKETY TWIN ENGINES COUGH SUDDENLY TO EMPHYSEMATOUS LIFE.

THE PLANE TAXIS BUMPILY DOWN THE RUNWAY... AS THE ONE-MAN GROUND CREW HASTENS INTO THE SHADOWS, THERE TO EFFECT...

TAKE-OFF!

THE REMOTE TRANSMITTER WORKED PERFECTLY-- JUST AS PIERRE PROMISED!

"THEY'RE DOOMED!!"

HEY-- WHAT'S GOIN' ON HERE?!

HOW COME WE'RE THE ONLY PASSENGERS ON THIS CRATE??

YOO-HOO! FLYBOY! WHERE'D YA GET YER PILOT'S LICENSE --AT SEARS??

WHAT 'RE YA--? ULP!

NOBODY HOME.

AND THE CONTROLS ARE LOCKED IN ONE SETTING...

...NATURALLY.

I COULDN'T FIND ANY PARACHUTES IN BACK. SO WE'RE TRAPPED, HUH?

WHAT MAKES YA SAY THAT?

CANADA, SOME SEVEN HOURS AND 44 MINUTES LATER:

FROM THE SHORE OF YOUR BASIC CRYSTAL BLUE LAKE...

...OVERLOOKING THE SNOW-CAPPED PEAKS AND THICK PINE WOODS COMMONLY BELIEVED TO ENCIRCLE DOWN-TOWN TORONTO...

ARF!

I SAY...!

...A PAINFULLY EARNEST PAIR OF EYES TRACKS THE PLANE'S PERILOUS DESCENT.

CRASH

WEEEEEE

FROM THE SOUND OF IT, CHAPS, I'D WAGER THAT CRAFT'S IN TROUBLE.

LET'S HAVE A LOOK, SHALL WE, OLD FELLOW?

GIDYAP!

THE SPIRITED STEED RESPONDS-- WITH PERHAPS A SLIGHT SUPERABUNDANCE OF GUSTO.

NO! PRINCE! WHOA, BOY! COME BACK!!

LOOOOO ARF

WUMP

ARF

WHILE, ON THE OPPOSITE SHORE...

FLY BY NIGHT

:WHEW:

"FLUSH" WOULD BE MORE LIKE IT.

A FLUSH CALL.

OR AN ABUTTED CALL, MAYBE.

THAT WAS A CLOSE CALL, HUH?

CHEEZ-- CAN'T SEE THE FOREST FOR THE SPLIT HAIRS, CAN YA?

OPEN YOUR EYES, DUCKY! CATCH THAT HAT! WE MADE IT! WE'RE IN CANADA!

GREAT.

'EVENING, FOLKS. BIT OF A NASTY SPILL YOU TOOK THERE, EH?

SGT. PRESTON DUDLEY, RCMP, AT YOUR SERVICE-- MY HORSE PRINCE--

--AND MY TRUSTY HUSKIE ELIZABETH.

YEAH, WELL-- CHARMED, I'M SURE.

WE'RE THE PAIN-WRACKED SURVI-VORS.

FIGGER YOU COULD GIVE US A LIFT TO CIVILIZATION?

I'M CERTAIN *PRINCE* WOULDN'T OBJECT.

HE APPRECIATES A LOVELY LADY ON HIS BACK AS MUCH AS *I*.

CLIMB *ABOARD*.

:SIGH:

SHORTLY, AT THE NEIGHBORHOOD RCMP OUTPOST...

FROM WHAT YOU'VE TOLD ME, I'D DEDUCE YOU'RE VICTIMS OF THE INFAMOUS *PIERRE DENTIFRIS*, CANADA'S ONLY *SUPER-PATRIOT!*

H-HOW CAN YOU KNOW *THAT*?

HIS *MODUS OPERANDI*, MA'AM, PIERRE *ALWAYS* USES BELLBOYS AND ROBOT PLANES.

ALAS, HE'S USUALLY MORE *SUCCESSFUL* AT ELIMINATING THE TARGETS OF HIS MAD *HATRED*.

WE'VE NEVER QUITE MANAGED TO MAKE A CHARGE *STICK*.

BUT WHY DOES HE *DO* THESE THINGS...?!

LOVE OF COUNTRY, I EXPECT... RATHER A FANATIC SEEKER AFTER THE CANADIAN *IDENTITY*, PIERRE IS.

LISTEN, I'M *SURE* THE SUBTLE COMPLEXITIES OF THE CRIMINAL MIND ARE A SOURCE OF *BOUNDLESS* FASCINATION...

BUT ARE WE GONNA *NAIL* THE BUM, OR *NOT*?!

I BEG YOUR *PARDON*, SIR! THE MOUNTIES *ALWAYS* GET THEIR MAN!

REALLY? ALWAYS?? THE COPS BACK HOME CAN'T EVEN CATCH A *COLD*!

I SUGGEST, IF YOU HARBOR *DOUBTS*...

...YOU OBSERVE ME IN *ACTION*. COME ALONG.

WE SHALL SMOKE OUT PIERRE AT *ONCE*!

A BRIEF RIDE LATER...

PIERRE DENTIFRIS
CANADA'S ONLY SUPER PATRIOT

YOU SEE! I TOLD YOU HE COULDN'T ELUDE ME FOR LONG!

GEE, THAT'S AMAZING!

NO OFFENSE, TOOTS--BUT YOU'RE TOO EASILY IMPRESSED.

SACRE BLEU! PRESTON DUDLEY OF THE MOUNTIES!

AND TO WHAT DO I OWE ZIS ODIOUS INTRUSION?

I WANT YOU TO MEET SOME FRIENDS OF MINE, PIERRE--FROM SOUTH OF THE BORDER.

AMERICANS?! I WEESH A BELLBOY WOULD DROP LUGGAGE ON YOUR HEADS!!

I WEESH YOU WOULD DIE IN ZE CRASH OF A ROBOT PLANE!!

I DESPISE VOUS!

CAREFUL, YOUNG MAN. YOU'LL INCRIMINATE YOURSELF.

THIS GEEZER?! ARE YOU SERIOUS? HE COULDN'T HURT A GNAT!

I COULD--IF IT WERE AN AMERICAN GNAT, DUCKEE!

I WAS ONCE A POWERFUL MAN IN CANADA--A HOTEL AND AIRLINE MAGNATE!

I LOVED CANADA--AND GREW SICK AT ZE WAY YOU BARBARIANS INVADED AND POLLUTED US WITH YOUR INDUSTRY, YOUR SO-CALLED CULTURE--!

"I TURNED MY RESOURCES TO A DARING PLAN-- TO TEACH YOU ARROGANT FOOLS A **LESSON!** I AIRLIFTED A MILLION **BEAVERS** TO CONSTRUCT A DAM ACROSS **NIAGARA**--

"--TO MAKE IT FALL ZE OTHER WAY!!

"AND I **SUCCEEDED!** MY PETS AND I SLOWED ZE FALLS TO A **TRICKLE!**

ZUT ALORS! ZAT SOUND IN ZE SKY! QUEL--?

"I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN YOUR MILITARY WOULD NOT ALLOW A **CANADIAN** MORE THAN A **MOMENT** OF NATIONAL PRIDE!

"I HAD BARELY ZE TIME TO **GLOAT**..

"...WHEN ZE **BOMBS** BEGAN FALLING!"

WHMMM

BLAAM

IT ALL HAPPENED BACK IN **FEBRUARY.** IT WAS KEPT VERY **HUSH-HUSH**, OF COURSE.

SINCE THEN, I'VE **AGED** NEARLY 73 YEARS AND LOST THE USE OF ALL MY LIMBS EXCEPT ZE **TEETH!**

WOW... WHAT A **SAD** STORY.

DOWNRIGHT PATHETIC.

LISTEN... IT'S BEEN **FUN** TALKIN' TO YA, OLD-TIMER... BUT WE GOTTA **RUN.**

TRY NOT TO BE **BITTER.** WE'LL PROB'LY DESTROY **OURSELVES** AN' SAVE YA THE **BOTHER.**

WAIT, YOU TWO! I THOUGHT YOU WANTED TO HAMMER THE SCOUNDREL!

OR HAVE YOU CHOSEN NOT TO BECOME... INVOLVED?

AW, COME OFF IT, DUDLEY! THIS OLD COOT'S OUTTA HIS MAPLE TREE!

AN' WE NEED SOME SLEEP!

VERY WELL... BUT YOU MAY LIVE TO RE-GRET THIS DECISION.

OH NO, HE WON'T! I SHALL SEE TO ZAT!

BELLHOP!

HE SURVIVED. I FAILED YOU-- AND TOMMY.

PLEASE LET ME KILL HIM AGAIN! I BEG YOU!

NATUREL-MENT.

BUT SINCE YOU BUN-GLED ZE ROBOT PLANE, I SUGGEST YOU EMPLOY MORE COMPLEX, SUBTLE MEANS ZIS TIME.

I WILL! I WILL!

"I'LL BE SO SUBTLE, HE'LL BARELY KNOW HE'S DEAD!"

THIS IS THE LIFE, EH? ROUGHING IT--IN A GOOD NEIGHBORHOOD!

SLEEP WELL, YOU TWO! AND BE UP AT THE CRACK OF DAWN!

HE'S NICE, ISN'T HE, HOWARD? EVEN IF HE DOES LIKE TO LIVE IN THE PAST A LITTLE.

HOW SO?

OH, YOU KNOW... HE WANTS TO BELIEVE THIS IS THE SAVAGE YUKON...

...WHEN WE'RE 60 MILES FROM LONDON, ONTARIO, AND 200,000 PEOPLE!

WE'VE ALL GOT OUR ILLUSIONS, TOOTS--YOU, ME, PRESTON, PIERRE...

IN FACT, I KEEP WONDERIN' IF ANYBODY'S GOT A LINE ON REALITY ANYMORE.

I'LL SHOW YOU REALITY, FOOL-- THE AMERICAN DREAM COME TRUE!

AN EYE FOR AN EYE--A DUCK FOR A BROTHER!

DIE, FEATHERED FIEND!!

HOWARD-- DON'T NOD OUT YET.

GRRR

--FOR I'M HATE-CRAZED! MADDENED!

OWCH!

THERE'S A MADMAN IN OUR ROOM!

ARF!

FOOLS!

SO? YA WANNA TAKE 'IM--OR TALK 'IM INTA SUBMISSION?

YOU CAN'T STOP ME! I'VE THE STRENGTH OF TEN--

EH?

HOWARD--IT'S THE BELLBOY FROM THE PLAZA HOTEL--!

OKAY, HATE-CRAZED AND MADDENED-- DOCILE YOURSELF AN' SPILL! THE WHOLE STORY!!

HUH? "DOCILE" ISN'T A VERB...!

AND WHEN THE TALE HAS BEEN TOLD..

SORRY I MISSED THE ACTION, FOLKS.

BUT AT LEAST WE NABBED THE ROGUE, EH?

YEAH... AN' MUCH AS I HATE TO ADMIT IT, PRES, YOU WERE RIGHT. HE'S PIERRE'S FLUNKIE.

HIS MOTIVATION'S STILL A LITTLE FUZZY FOR MY TASTE, BUT...!

NO MATTER. I'LL RUN HIM IN *POST-HASTE.*

AND COME DAWN--WE STALK PIERRE *HIMSELF!*

DIDJA *HEAR* THAT, TOOTS? TOMORROW, WE--

TOOTS...?

I SHOULD'A KNOWN. NOTHIN'S *EVER* THAT EASY.

SHE'S *GONE*-- AN' THE *WINDOW'S* THE ONLY EGRESS.

TOO *DARK* TO SEE *MUCH*-- EXCEPT ANIMAL TRACKS.

BUT THAT'S *ENOUGH.*

"SHE DIDN'T LEAVE UNDER HER OWN POWER. SOMEHOW, SHE WAS *BORNE* AWAY--

"--ON THE BACK OR BACKS OF SOME *CRAWLING* THING OR ANOTHER.

"*NUTS!!*"

HERE I GO A' FOLLOWIN' *AGAIN*-- NO DOUBT DIRECTLY INTO THE EAR, NOSE, OR THROAT OF *DEATH.*

MY *HEAD* IS STARTIN' TO *ACHE.*

THE TRAIL LEADS INTO THE DEEP WOODS, EASTWARD TOWARD THE DAWN...

... AND TERMINATES HERE, MANY HOURS AND MILES LATER, AT...

...NIAGARA FALLS!

MONSIEUR DUCK!!

SLOWLY HE TURNS...

AW, NO...!

AW, OUI, MONSIEUR! IT IS I--PIERRE DENTIFRIS-- IN ZE MOST FORMIDABLE EXOSKELETON EVER DEVISED BY MAN!!

VOUS THOUGHT I WAS A HELPLESS CRIPPLE-- ZE WAY ALL YOU AMERICANS THINK OF CANADA ITSELF!

WELL, IT IS NOT VRAI! I AM-- LE BEAVER!

AND IF YOU WISH TO SEE YOUR JEUNE FILLE IN UNE PIECE AGAIN--

--YOU MUST FIGHT ME TO LE MORT--

--AND DON'T DALLY ABOUT IT!

HOWARD... HE'S NOT KIDDING! THE TREE'S WOBBLING ALREADY!

CHEW CHEW

CHOMP CHOMP CHOMP

MY PETS WILL STOP GNAWING ONLY WHEN I COMMAND ZEM--

--OR IF I DIE AND ZEY HAVE NOTHING TO LIVE FOR.

B-BUT...

JE SAIS! VOUS ARE ASKING YOURSELF... WHAT HAS ZIS TO DO FROM AMERICAN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS, NON?

WELL, YEAH... THE QUESTION DID CROSS MY MIND...!

IT HAS TO DO WITH SHADOWS, DUCKEE! CANADA HAS WILTED IN AMERICA'S FOR TOO LONG!

WE HAVE WATCHED WHILE VOUS SQUANDERED YOUR NATURAL RESOURCES... WAITING FEARFULLY FOR YOUR APPETITES TO TURN NORTHWARD WHEN YOUR OWN TERRITORY WAS GUTTED!

SO I ARRANGED FOR VOUS TO BE NOMINATED BY THE ALL-NIGHT PARTY!

I WANTED TO OFFER A COMPLETELY HONEST CANDIDATE-- THEN RUIN HIM IN ZE PUBLIC EYEBALL!

THEN, YOUR ALREADY APATHETIC COUNTRYMEN CONSUMED WITH DESPAIR, MY PETS AND I COULD INVADE ZE U.S.--

I WOULD HAVE ENGINEERED ZE DISPIRIT OF '76!!

FOOL! YOUR DEFEAT WOULD LAY BARE ZE UTTER ROTTENNESS OF YOUR NATION'S POLITICAL PROCESS!

--AND BE WELCOMED AS HEROES! MY COUNTRY WOULD BE REDEEMED, OUR PARANOIA TURNED UPSIDE-DOWN!

HAH...?

LOOK, BUCK-TOOTH, MAYBE I'M A LITTLE DENSE, BUT--

CANADA COULD ANNEX THE UNITED STATES!!

NOW YOU *SEE*, DUCK--WHY YOU MUST NOT RETURN *ALIVE!*

IF VOUS *EXONERATE* YOURSELF--!

AH! OUI! TRES *BON!* ZIS WAY, FOWL!

HEAD FEELS LIKE AN ELEPHANT'S PLAYIN' *SOCCER* WITH IT, BUT--!

KEEP YER HAIRSHIRT ON, PAL! *I'M* COM--

I'M C--

I'M--

THE *HELL* I AM!!

COWARD!! HOW DARE VOUS TURN BACK?!

AAH-- *CHEW* IT, PIERRE!

I JUST FIGGERED OUT WHAT THIS HEAD-ACHE WAS TRYIN' TA *TELL* ME!

AN' AS FAR AS *I'M* CONCERNED --YOU AN' YER *POLITICS*--

HOWARD-- LOOK WHO JUST *ARRIVED!*

--CAN GO *JUMP!*

WE SAW IT *ALL!* YOU WERE *BRILLIANT!*

FEH!

HOWARD-- *WAIT!* WHAT'S *WRONG?*

COME *BACK!!*

WELL, ELIZABETH...

I GUESS *THIS* BASKET CASE IS *CLOSED.*

NEXT *SWAN-SONG* of the *LIVING DEAD DUCK!*

(A SURREALISTIC CHEAP SHOT)

HOWARD THE DUCK

MARVEL® COMICS GROUP

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

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TRAPPED IN A WORLD HE NEVER MADE!

HOWARD THE DUCK™

OUT OF THE EGG...

...INTO THE FRYING PAN!

WAAAAUGH

"DOOM IN A DARK DIMENSION!"

COLON-LEIALOHA

From the time of his hatching, he was...different. A potentially brilliant scholar who dreaded the structured environment of school, he educated himself in the streets, taking whatever work was available, formulating his philosophy of self from what he learned of the world about him. And then the Cosmic Axis shifted...and that world *changed.* Suddenly, he was stranded in a universe he could not fathom. Without warning, he became a strange fowl in an even stranger land.

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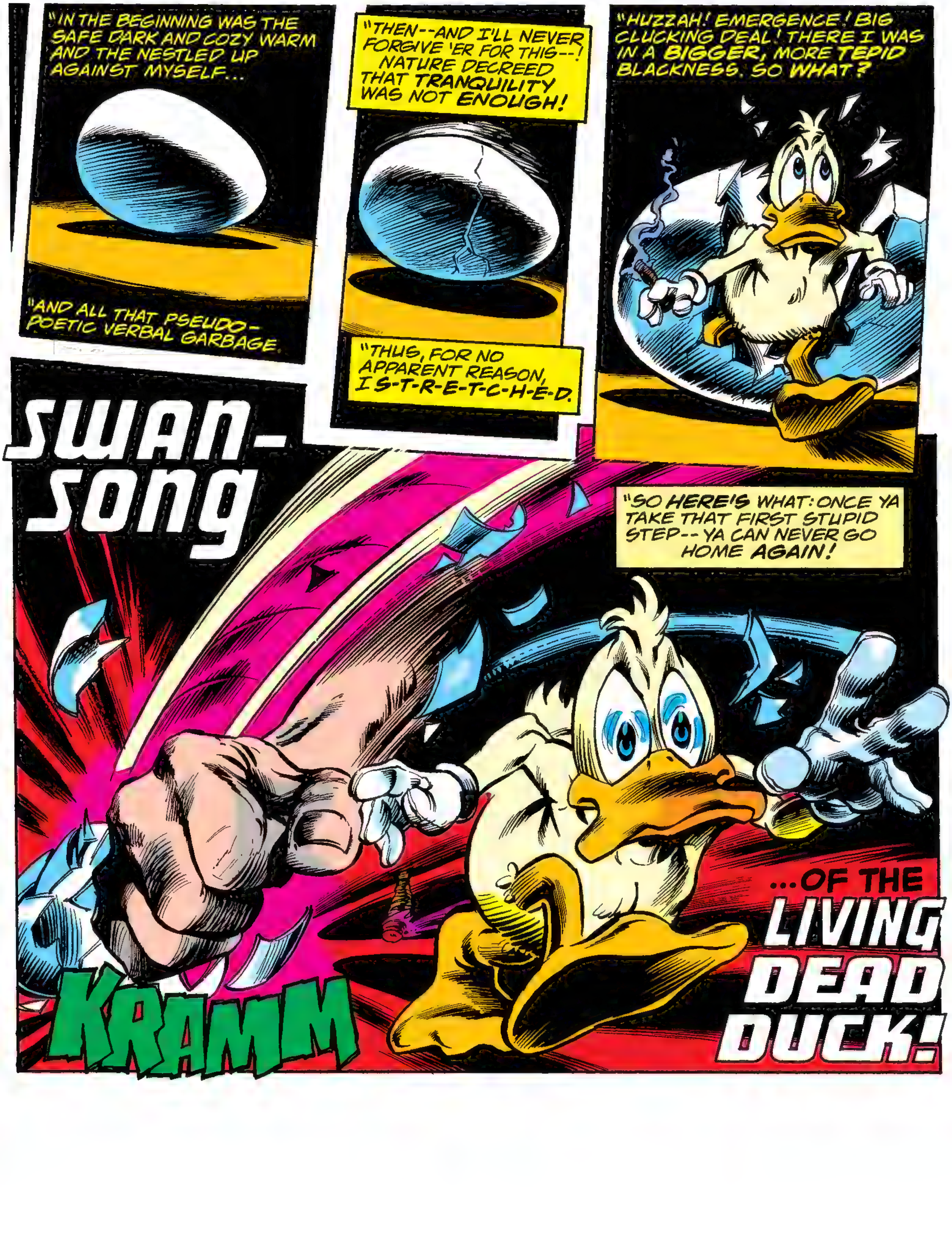
"IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE SAFE DARK AND COZY WARM AND THE NESTLED UP AGAINST MYSELF...
"AND ALL THAT PSEUDO-POETIC VERBAL GARBAGE.
"THEN--AND I'LL NEVER FORGIVE 'ER FOR THIS--! NATURE DECREED THAT TRANQUILITY WAS NOT ENOUGH!
"THUS, FOR NO APPARENT REASON, I S-T-R-E-T-C-H-E-D.
"HUZZAH! EMERGENCE! BIG CLUCKING DEAL! THERE I WAS IN A BIGGER, MORE TEPID BLACKNESS. SO WHAT?
"SO HERE'S WHAT: ONCE YA TAKE THAT FIRST STUPID STEP-- YA CAN NEVER GO HOME AGAIN!
SWAN-SONG
KRAMM
...OF THE LIVING DEAD DUCK!

"NOW WATCH CLOSELY, KIDS. YOU'RE ABOUT TO OBSERVE...

"... THE PROCESS OF SOCIALIZATION IN ACTION!

"...ACTION!

"...ACTION!

"NOTE: THIS ISN'T SOCIALIZATION AS IN 'SOCIALISM'. IT'S A TECHNIQUE THAT EVERY CULTURE HAS MASTERED, ALMOST BY DEFINITION.

SLAM!

"MOSTLY IT'S SIMPLE INDOCTRINATION, SEE?

"AND ANY IDEOLOGY CAN PLAY. (LISTEN, IF THIS'S GETTIN' TOO PEDANTIC FOR YA, JUST HOLLER. I'LL TRY TA TONE IT DOWN.) ANYWAY...

"YOU'RE EDUCATED--LARGELY INFORMALLY, BUT NONETHELESS EFFECTIVELY--IN A BODY OF CUSTOMS, MORES, TABOOS.

"YA LEARN NOT TA YELL 'FIRE' IN A CROWDED THEATRE--NOT TA GO 'HUBBA-HUBBA' AT PICTURES OF ELEANOR ROOSEVELT--

"--AN' MOST OF ALL--

"--YA LEARN THERE'S CERTAIN PLACES YER SUPPOSED TA TREAD LIGHTLY!"

=ULP=

YOW!TCH!

THIS IS AN OUT-RAGE!

WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?!

M-MY GOD... YOU'RE A DUCK! AND YOU'RE BIGGER THAN ALL OF US--!

WHO LET YOU INTO OUR ROOM?

YOUR--?! BUT WHAT DO YOU DO IN HERE? THERE'S NO FURNITURE, NO NOURISHMENT, NO WAY OUT--!

WE--ENTERTAIN GUESTS. WE PROVIDE--ESCAPE.

OH. OH! SURE, I GET IT! I ESCAPED INTA--

INDEED. AND HERE YOU'LL STAY.

YOUR VERY EXISTENCE POSES TOO MANY QUESTIONS, DUCK!

WE'VE NO ROOM FOR A FLUKE LIKE YOURSELF! THEREFORE--

OH, YEAH??

"ONE THING ABOUT INDOCTRINATION: SOME OF US JUST DON'T TAKE TO IT NATURALLY.

"SO THERE'S GOTTA BE A MEANS OF ENFORCEMENT--AN' SOME DUDE HEAVY ENOUGH TA MAKE IT BELIEVABLE."

DESIST, DUCK!!

UH-OH.

I AM KONG LOMERATE--AND AND I OWN THOSE PEOPLE YOU'RE TRAMPLING!

BUT... Y'YOU'RE A HIRSUTE APE! ON THIS WORLD YOU CAN'T--

WRONG! IT'S BECAUSE I'M NOT HUMAN THAT MY WORD IS LAW! I ONLY EXIST ON PAPER!

AND YOU, TOO, MUST OBEY ME, OR...

AAAH--GO SUCK A BEEFJERKY! I'M MY OWN DUCK! I GO WHERE I WANT, SAY WHAT I WANT--!

AN' I BEEN THUMBIN' MY BEAK AT GORILLAS LIKE YOU MY WHOLE LIFE!

BUT THEY NEVER POSSESSED MY POWER, FEATHERED UPSTART! THEY COULD MERELY BERATE YOU--!

I CAN WIPE EVERY TRACE OF YOU FROM THE FACE OF THIS "WORLD YOU NEVER MADE!"

WAAAUGH!

WHAM

CANCELLED

"OVER TIME, OF COURSE, AND AFTER A **SUCCESSION** OF FEATHER'S-BREADTH ESCAPES FROM THE SYSTEM, THE **STRAIN** BEGINS TO **TELL.**

"IN SOME, IT EVINCES ITSELF AS **ANGER**, IN OTHERS AS SELF-DOUBT. FOR ME, IT WAS AN OVERWHELMING **SADNESS**...

GURU'S HOUSE 10 MI.

"...AND UTTER **APATHY** TOWARD THE VERY BUSINESS OF **LIVING.**

"OUTWARDLY, I'M SURE IT LOOKED LIKE **CYNICISM**--BUT A CYNIC'S JUST A FALLEN **IDEALIST**, RIGHT?

"JUST A POOR SLOB LOOKING FOR ANY MORSEL OF INFO THAT'LL **MOTIVATE** 'IM AGAIN."

YOO-HOO! GURU? ANYBODY **HOME?**

"THE CAPED MAN ANSWERED WITH HIS **EYES**, INVITING ME IN."

YOU GOTTA HELP ME-- YA GOTTA GIMME THE **ANSWER!** WHAT'S IT ALL **ABOUT?** WHAT'S THE **MEANING** OF LIFE?

GIMME IT STRAIGHT! **WHY** AM I?

WHY **NOT?**

WE'RE IN THE SAME **BOAT**, THEN, HUH? BUT AT LEAST **I'VE** GOT SOME CONTROL OVER MY DESTINY. I'VE GOT A **FEW** FACTS.

TWO AN' TWO IS STILL **FOUR...!**

AN' THEN THERE'S THE LAW OF--

--GRAVITY.

"I FIGGER THAT'S WHEN MY MOST **CHERISHED** NOTION--THAT 'FACTS' WERE **MORE** THAN ASSUMPTIONS BASED ON PAST OBSERVATIONS --DIED.

"THERE WAS NOTHIN' OUT THERE--OR IN **HERE**, FOR THAT MATTER-- BUT THE **VORTEX** AT THE CENTER OF THE **VOID**."

GOO.

"SUDDENLY, I WAS SPOUTIN' **DUCKLING TALK**. NOTHIN' ELSE MADE **SENSE**. GOO. GWAK. GWAAAW. PEEP. DIDJA EVER GET THE FEELING YER WORDS WERE JUST FILLIN' **DEAD AIR?**

D O
B A

SPLAT

"PRATTLE AND TWATTLE AND SPLAT ON YER GUT! HERE'S SOMETHIN' TA LIFT YA OUTTA THAT **RUT**:

BEV!

C'MERE, DUCKY! I HAVE SOMETHING TO **SHOW** YOU!

FOR **REAL**? SOMETHIN' **NEW**?

UH-**HUH**! THE TRUTH IS **ALWAYS** NEW!

PEEK-A-BOO!

WELL...?

=URP= CAN I GO NOW?

NOT YET.

SQUIT

OKAY. **NOW** YOU CAN GO.

SNAP

THANKS-- TWO **HEAPS**.

"THE **EGG**.

"BACK TO THE EGG. BACK TO THE EGG. BACK TO THE **EGG**.

"THAT'S ALL MY MIND WOULD **SAY**-- ERGO, BACK TO THE EGG.

"HOWEVER, AS PREVIOUSLY NOTED, YA CAN'T GO HOME **AGAIN**.

"SO, IN THE END...

CLAMP

"...THERE WAS THE MENACING DARK AND STUFFY WARM AND THE CHAFING OF BONE AGAINST WEARY BONE.

"AND, THEN I **WOKE UP**-- TOTALLY DISORIENTED, IN A COLD SWEAT, AN' WITH A **HEADACHE** THAT FELT LIKE MY SKULL HAD JUST RETURNED FROM TWO WEEKS IN **NEW JERSEY.**"

=HLP=

WH-WHERE **AM** I?! LAST I REMEMBER, I'D JUST **WALKED OUT** ON THE FIGHT WITH **THE BEAVER** OVER NIAGARA FALLS! AN' NOW--**NO!** WAITAMINIT!

SOMETHIN' **DID** HAPPEN AFTER THAT--I THINK-- I **COLLAPSED!**

I SUDDENLY FELT SO **TIRED**--AN' I HAD THIS **SAME** HEADACHE--!

I SAW THE **GROUND** RUSHIN' UP AT ME--

--THEN, **POOF!**

PRESTON DUDLEY-- THE PRIDE O' THE **MOUNTIES**--MUST'A GIVEN US A LIFT **HERE**-- WHEREVER HERE **IS!** A MOTEL, I GUESS.

ANYWAY, **BEV** SOUNDS OKAY--SNORIN' UP A STORM, AS USUAL.

YEP--THE WORLD'S LOOKIN' **GOOD**-- LIKE A CHOPPIN' BLOCK **SHOULD.**

WHAT?

WHY'M I THINKIN' BERSERK CHIMNEY'S LIKE **THAT??**

HUH?

OH, WELL... A COUPLE'A **ASPIRIN** AN' SOME CLOUD JUICE OUGHTTA--

"CLOUD JUICE??"

RATS! NO PENNIES!

GUESS I'LL JUST HAVETA **SETTLE** FOR A GLASS OF PIANO, THEN.

=WAAAUGH= THAT AIN'T IVORY! IT'S--**SPIDER WEBS!**

M-MUSTA TURNED THE WRONG HANDLE! I WANTED COLD--!

NOW I'VE GONE AND SCALDED MY MIND--!

HOW'S IT HANGIN', DUCK-O?

BY THE NECK UNTIL DEAD-- WHICHEVER COMES FIRST.

HUH? WHAT ARE YOU CRINGING ABOUT? YOU KNOW ME-- YOUR FRIENDLY NEIGHBORHOOD PIANO?

AW, NO--I GET IT NOW! I NEVER REALLY AWAKENED AT ALL! I ONLY DREAMED I WOKE UP!!

WELCOME TO MY NIGHTMARE-- PART TWO!

BEAT IT!

LISTEN, I BROUGHT YOU A PRESENT! BURY YOUR BEAK IN THIS, FELLA.

IF SOMEBODY'D GIVEN ME A COPY, I WOULDN'T BE THE WALL-CRAWLING MASS OF GUILT I AM TODAY.

NEITHER --EXACTLY!

AW, G'WAN--

WHEN I SAY NO I FEEL GUILTY

A GUIDE TO ASSERTIVE BEHAVIOR

THE LAST THING I NEED NOW IS POP PSYCHOLOGY-- EVEN IF THE TITLE IS GERMANE TO MY SITUATION!

WHAT IS IT--"ADAM BEDE" OR "THE IDIOT"?

OKAY, FEATHER-BRAIN-- WHATEVER YOU SAY!

CAN'T BLAME ME FOR *TRYING!*

HAVE A NICE LIFE! *SEE YA!*

POOFF

=AWP=

THIS'S GOTTA *STOP!* I GOTTA SHAKE LOOSE THAT GLOB O' FROZEN *CHILI* TRYIN' TO PASS FOR MY *BRAIN!*

MAYBE IF I SNEAK BACK TO *BED*, I CAN RISE AN' SHINE ALL OVER AGAIN-- FOR *ACTUAL*, THIS TIME!

NUTS! NO ROOM FOR ME-- I'M STILL HERE!

WAITAMINIT! MAYBE I CAN ROUSE *MYSELF!*

C'MON, KILLER! UP 'N' *AT* 'EM! SLEEPYTIME'S *OVER!*

LET'S *GO*, HANDSOME! THERE'S A *NEW DAY* WAITIN' OUT THERE!

NO DICE! HE WON'T *BUDGE!*

WELL... MAYBE IT'S FOR THE *BEST.*

AFTER ALL, IF *HE* WOKE UP, *I'D* PROB'LY CEASE TO EXIST!

AN' WHAT IF *I'M* THE REAL DUCK AN' *HE'S* THE DREAM??

I'D BE *DEAD*, AN' THERE'D BE A *BOGUS* CANARD WADDLIN' AROUND IN MY PLACE!

NO, WAIT-- IF I WERE DEAD, I COULDN'T *DREAM*. SO *HE'D* DIE, TOO.

NIAGARA FALLS INN

SO *THAT'S* WHY I'VE BEEN GREETING EACH NEW DAY WITH *NAUSEA* LATELY.

OFFICE & COFFEE SHOP

ANYHOW, BEFORE I MAKE ANY *MORE* RASH MOVES, I BETTER *ANALYZE* THE PROBLEM OVER *COFFEE!*

"MY SELF-IMAGE HAS ALWAYS BEEN THAT OF AN IRASCIBLE, SOMEWHAT HIGH-STRUNG, BUT EMINENTLY **LIKABLE** DUCK. **STUBBORN**, BUT ABLE TO TAKE CRITISISM AND EVALUATE IT DISPASSIONATELY. **OPINIONATED**, BUT RECEPTIVE TO NEW IDEAS. **HOWEVER--**

"I CAN'T **STAND IT** WHEN PEOPLE CALL ME **NAMES!!**"

KNOW-IT-ALL!

HEY, GUYS-- LOOK! IT'S--

COWARD THE DUCK!

YOU **GLUTTON!**

YOU **PAUPER!**

STUFFED SHIRT!

PESSIMIST!

=WAAAUGH= OKAY, GUYS-- **RELAX!** I CAN TAKE A HINT! I KNOW WHEN I'M NOT WELCOME!

"THE BEAVER'S **BELLHOP**-- THE GIANT **GINGER-BREAD MAN**-- THE FINANCIAL WIZARD, **PRO-RATA**-- TURNIP-MAN-- **GONZO** THE CLOWN-- **WINKY-MAN**--AND THEY WEREN'T EVEN TAKING ME **SERIOUSLY!!**

SEE? I'LL JUST BACK RIGHT OUT ON YA-- LIKE I SHOULD'A DONE WHEN I FIRST MET YA!

SLAM

AN' I'LL JUST KEEP BACKIN' AWAY--

--'TIL I'M LIGHT YEARS FROM--

=WAAUGH=

SO! A SET-UP, EH? THOUGHT I'D BE OFF-GUARD, EH? THE OLD SQUEEZE-PLAY, EH?

WELL, SURPRISE! I KNOW QUAK-FU, SEE, AN'--

I WOULD ADVISE, MY FRIEND...

...THAT YOU RESERVE YOUR MARTIAL ARTS EXPERTISE FOR A SITUATION WHICH DEMANDS IT.

OPEN YOUR EYES, AND BEHOLD AN ALLY, HOWARD--I, DR. PIANO.

YOU SEEM TENSE, MY FRIEND. WHAT TROUBLES YOU?

EVERYTHING IN GENERAL --AN EVERYTHING IN PARTI-CULAR.

OH. THAT.

IF YOU'D CARE TO DISCUSS IT, MINE ARE SYMPATHETIC EARS.

STATE IT, THEN. PERHAPS TOGETHER WE MIGHT FORMULATE A SOLUTION.

WHAT'S TO DISCUSS? I'M NOT AS DUMB AS I LOOK, CHUM. I KNOW WHAT THE PROBLEM IS.

TO THE FALLS

OKAY: SINCE I CAME TO THIS IDIOT WORLD, I'VE BEEN BEHAVING COMPLETELY CONTRARY TO MY TRUE NATURE.

COULD YOU ELABORATE--?

I KEEP GETTIN' MYSELF STUCK IN THE HERO'S ROLE, FOR ONE THING.

I'M TEARIN' MY FEATHERS OUT OVER MONEY FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MY LIFE--!

AN' I CAN'T FIGURE OUT WHY...!

PERHAPS YOU'VE OBEYED THE DICTATES OF YOUR CONSCIENCE, RATHER THAN--

BULL!!

I'VE OBEYED THE "DICTATES" OF MY CULTURAL CONDITIONING, THAT'S WHAT!

AFTER RESISTIN' IT FOR ALL THOSE YEARS BACK HOME--

I'VE FALLEN VICTIM TO MY PROGRAMMING! SUDDENLY, I'M RIDIN' THEIR MERRY-GO-ROUND, GRABBIN' FOR THEIR BRASS-RING!

"THEY"--?

THE ARMY OF THE STATUS QUO! THE TURKEYS WHO MAKE THE RULES, DEFINE SOCIETY'S VALUES!

I MEAN-- IT'S HERESY IN THESE PARTS NOT TA WANNA BE YER BROTHER'S KEEPER. BUT IT'S MY BURNIN' AMBITION TA BE AN ONLY CHILD!!

I'M BEGINNING...TO UNDERSTAND.

BUT SURELY SOMETHING MOTIVATED YOUR SELF-SACRIFICE. PERHAPS IN YOUR UNCONSCIOUS, YOU--

AW, DOC-- GET OFF!!

I KNOW IT DOESN'T SIT WELL WITH YOU MYSTIC TYPES-- BUT I'M BY NATURE A PRAGMATIST! I TAKE THE ROUTE THAT WORKS!

BUT I'M SUSCEPTIBLE TO PRESSURE --ESPECIALLY IF IT PLAYS ON MY ACHILLES WEB-- COMPASSION FOR THE UNDER-DOG!

BUT I GOT NO ULTERIOR MOTIVES! I'M THE ONLY UP-FRONT CHARACTER IN THIS DREAM! I--

YOU LIE, BEAST!!

DOC...?

YOUR PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDACY--YOUR FEIGNED ROLE AS **OUTCAST**--YOUR WHOLE **LIFE** HAS BEEN A SORDID **PLOT**--

--TO ROB THE WORLD OF ITS HEALTHY **KIDNEYS!!**

KHOOM

"I MANAGED TO **DODGE** THE BLOW--BUT THE **KIDNEY LADY'S** CANE STRUCK THE CLIFFSIDE SO **HARD**--

"--IT **FISSURED!** AND UP FROM THE STEAMY BOWELS OF THE EARTH CLAWED **LE BEAVER,** THE CRAZY OLD CANADIAN IN THE SUPER-POWERED **EXOSKELETON** WHO SABATOGED MY PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN AND BLACKENED MY **NAME!**

"AN' NOW THE MOMENT OF DECISION HAD ARRIVED **AGAIN!**"

"**LE BEAVER**--THE ONLY FIGHT I'D EVER **WALKED OUT ON**--'CAUSE IT WAS JUST **TOO** LUDICROUS!

HE EMBARRASSED ME. IS THAT WORTH RISKIN' MY LIFE OVER?

NO!

ON THE OTHER HAND-- TAKIN' THE SENSIBLE ROUTE LAST TIME SAVED MY TAIL AT THE EXPENSE OF MY NERVES.

IF I SKIP OUT, I FLIP OUT... THAT MUCH I KNOW.

SO MAYBE THIS'S THE ONE TIME I SHOULD'A STOOD MY GROUND-- WHEN MY HONOR WAS AT STAKE.

OKAY, UGLY... THIS TIME WE DO IT YOUR WAY! THIS TIME, I--

--FIGHT!

OWCH.

BOOT

"BUT DID THAT STOP ME?!

RATT TAT TAT

SPANNG

PING

"HIS RODENT SUIT WAS FASHIONED OF TRIPLE-THICK TITANIUM STEEL.

"NO! I PULLED A THOMPSON SUB-MACHINE GUN FROM MY COAT!

"I PELTED HIS PELT WITH COLD LEAD!

"ALL OF WHICH RICOCHETED RIGHT BACK AT ME.

"THEN--

CRUNCH

"GLOVE-TO-PAW, I WAS NO MATCH FOR 'IM. MY WEAPON HAD FAILED ME MISERABLY.

"I NEEDED AN AVENUE OF RETREAT! AN' THERE IT WAS-- THE TIGHTROPE HE'D STRUNG OVER THE FALLS.

"IT SHOULD'A WORKED. I SHOULD'A BEEN ABLE TO MAKE IT BACK TO CANADA, CATCH MY BREATH, AN' DEVISE A NEW PLAN OF ATTACK.

"BUT--"

ONE MOMENT, SIR. A FEW QUESTIONS.

CARRYING ANY FIREARMS? LIQUOR? HOW LONG WILL YOU BE STAYING IN CANADA? WHAT--

"--I FORGOT I'D HAVE'TA PASS CUSTOMS!

"SO I LEARNED A VERY SIMPLE LESSON THE HARD WAY.

WAAUGH

"SEE--

"MY HEAD WAS THROBBIN', MY NERVES WERE SHOT BECAUSE FOR ONCE I'D HEEDED MY BETTER JUDGMENT --AN RUN AWAY.

"SOME FOLKS WOULD HAVE YA BELIEVE THAT'S NOT THE DRAKELY THING TO DO.

"WHAT THEY DON'T TELL YA, THOUGH--

"THERE'S REALLY NOTHIN' GLAMOROUS OR HONORABLE ABOUT GETTIN' KILLED TO PERPETUATE THEIR MASCULINE STEREOTYPE.

WAAAAUGH

"RIGHT. I WAS BRAVE. I WAS HEROIC. I ACTED IN THE BEST MACHO TRADITION OF UNTHINKING PUGNACITY. AN' I DIED... FOR HONOR.

"AN' MY ETERNAL REWARD? TO BE LAUGHED AT FOR ALL TIME -- BY THE BUMS. WHO PUT ME THERE!

"I JUST HOPE I'M STILL DREAMIN'-- CAUSE IF THIS IS FOR REAL, I'M GONNA GET VERY DEPRESSED."

NEXT QUACK-UP!

HOWARD THE DUCK

30¢ CC

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TRAPPED IN A WORLD HE NEVER MADE!

HOWARD THE DUCK™

IT BEGAN AS CHEAP TRANSPORTATION--

--BUT IT ENDED IN DISASTER!!

COLON • LEIALOHA

BUS TO OBLIVION!

From the time of his hatching, he was...different. A potentially brilliant scholar who dreaded the structured environment of school, he educated himself in the streets, taking whatever work was available, formulating his philosophy of self from what he learned of the world about him. And then the Cosmic Axis shifted...and that world *changed*. Suddenly, he was stranded in a universe he could not fathom. Without warning, he became a strange fowl in an even stranger land.

Stan Lee PRESENTS: HOWARD THE DUCK!™

STEVE GERBER WRITER/EDITOR
GENE COLAN ARTIST
STEVE LEIALOHA INKER
JIM NOVAK, LETTERER
JAN COHEN, COLORIST

WELCOME TO THE PITS OF *HECK*...
...TO WHICH "H" THE "D"...
...HAS BEEN *DARNED* FOR ALL TIME.
OF COURSE, IT'S ALL JUST A *DREAM*... HENCE THE UNGAINLY *EUPHEMISMS*.
THE *MEPHISTO* YOU SAY, SPACE TURNIP! IT'S ALL *REAL*--THE HEAT, THE HUMILIATION, THE PRICK OF MY *PITCHFORK!*
"*DREAM*" IS THE MISNOMER. WHAT WE'VE GOT HERE IS A BONA FIDE--
=OUCH=

QUACK-UP!

ISN'T THAT SO, HOWARD?

B-BUT, DOCTOR -- WHAT'S **WRONG** WITH HIM? HE'S BEEN LIKE THIS FOR **DAYS**-- EVER SINCE WE CROSSED THE BORDER BACK INTO THE STATES FROM **CANADA**-- AFTER HIS FIGHT WITH **LE BEAVER.***

WE WALKED INTO THIS **MOTEL** ROOM-- HE COLLAPSED ON THE **BED**--

--AND JUST NEVER WOKE UP! HE TOSSES AND **SCREAMS**, THEN LIES PEACEFULLY FOR A WHILE, THEN IT ALL BEGINS AGAIN. **WHY??**

WHAT'S WRONG WITH HIM??

=OUCH=

PLEASE UNDERSTAND, MS. SWITZLER, I'VE NEVER TREATED A PATIENT QUITE **LIKE** HIM BEFORE--SO THIS DIAGNOSIS **ISN'T** 100% RELIABLE--!

BUT IF HE WERE **HUMAN**, I'D CALL IT A CLEAR CASE OF **ACUTE** EXHAUSTION.

*HTD #9.--STEVE.

YOU DON'T MEAN-- A **NERVOUS BREAKDOWN?!**

LET'S HOPE NOT. WE'LL KNOW MORE WHEN HE **AWAKENS.** MEANTIME...

I'VE ADMINISTERED A MEGAVITAMIN INJECTION, AND--

B-BUT... WHAT IF HE HAS TO GO TO A **HOSPITAL?** WE'RE =SOB= **BROKE**--

--AND FOR **YOU**, I'M PRESCRIBING HOT **TEA** AND SOMETHING TO **EAT.**

NOW! UNDER **MY** SUPER-VISION.

THEN WE CAN DISCUSS THE MATTER-- CALMLY. AGREED?

Y-YES...THANK YOU...THANK YOU SO MUCH...

SLAM

...eh?

BONGA BONGA

WHAM.

WHIM.

=WAAUGH=

WAKE UP.

NO.

WHY NOT?

BECAUSE THE WORLD SUCKS BEEF JERKIES.

RIGHT. BUT BEV WILL MAKE IT A-A-A-A-ALL BETTER.

BEV?

BEV!

OH! YEAH! BEV!

BEV?

BEV?

YOO-HOO!

BEV-

-ER-

-LY?

BEV?

PFFFFFT

NO BEV.

YOU'RE ALL ALONE.

NOBODY CARES.

AND THE SHEETS ARE ALL SWEATY.

PIANO.

EPOXY.

HOT TEA.
MY SUPER-VISION.
I DARE YOU TO GET UP!
GET DRESSED.
FOR TEA.
OKAY, SO YOU DID IT. BIG DEAL.
YOU'RE STILL WASTED.
KLUNK
CLICK
YOU'LL NEVER PUT ALL THE PIECES TO--
OFFICE & COFFEE SHOP
OH, WHIZ KID, HUH? FIGGERED IT ALL OUT, DIDJA?
WELL, BRACE THYSELF, THUCKER--
THUD
--FOR A REAL KICK IN THE HEAD.
HERE YOU ARE --ALONE, DISORIENTED, UNABLE TO THINK RATIONALLY-- AND SHE'S OUT HAVIN' A GOOD TIME--
--WITH A HANDSOME HAIRLESS APE!
SOME PAL.

HEEEYY! THAT'S GOOD! GET ANGRY! GIVE US ONE O' THOSE FAMOUS H.T.D. TANTRUMS!

BLACK DOG BUS TICKETS SOLD HERE

DING DING DING

AAH, SHUDDUP!

HEY, CONCIERGE! WHEN'S THE NEXT BUS OUTTA HERE?

IT'S DUE ANY TIME NOW. BUT, SIR, YOU REALLY DON'T WANT TO...

SEZ WHO???

HERE'S THE LAST O' MY PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN TREASURY! HOW FAR'LL IT GET ME?

I--I DON'T KNOW. I'LL HAVE TO COUNT IT--

WELL??

YOU COULD RIDE TO THE END OF THE LINE ON THIS, SIR, BUT--

NO "BUTS!" JUST GIMME THE TICKET!

ALL RIGHT --IF YOU INSIST.

HERE YOU ARE-- AND THERE'S YOUR BUS. BUT ARE YOU SURE YOU'D RATHER NOT WAIT FOR THE NEXT--?

JUST MIND YER OWN BIZNESS, MAC. YOU RUN YER MOTEL, AN' I'LL RUN MY LIFE, OKAY?

WHATEVER YOU SAY. HOPE YOU WON'T BE SORRY.

YEAH, WELL--I APPRECIATE THE DEEP CONCERN.

CLEVELAND

"BUT I CAN'T IMAGINE ANY SORRIER SPOT THAN THE ONE I'M IN RIGHT NOW."

BETTER, HUH? QUIET. DARK. ALMOST EVERY-BODY'S ASLEEP. NO ONE TO HARRASS YOU.

YEAH. THIS'S THE LIFE.

SO THEN WHY'VE YOU BEEN SITTING RIGID LIKE THAT FOR AN HOUR AND A HALF?

HAH?

CAN'T GET COMFY, CAN YA?

JACKET BUNCHES UP IN BACK.

SLEEVES RIDE UP.

MUFF IS CHOKING YA, HUH?

SEAT BACK

AH! CLEVER FELLOW!

PITY, THOUGH--HOW YOU AND MACHINES HAVE NEVER GOTTEN ALONG.

THEY HATE YOU.

YOU HATE THEM.

ZZUNNG

BOOiiiNG

WAUK

THEY WORK FOR EVERYONE ELSE-- BUT YOU THEY WANT TO KILL.

'SCUSE ME-- D'YOU KNOW HOW TA WORK THIS THING?

ARE YOU ADDWESSING ME?

YEAH.

NO. THIS IS MY FIRST TWIP ON A BUS.

MY NAME IS WINDA.

HI!

MY PAWENTS SAY I'M POSSESSED BY THE DEVIL.

I'M ON MY WAY TO CWEVEWAND TO BE EXORCISED.

OKAY.

FORGET I ASKED.

I SHOULD'A KNOWN-- 139 SEATS, 139 STORIES.

I--

CLEVE-LAND?!

IS THIS BUS GOING TO--

EXCUSE ME--

I'M TAKING A **SURVEY**, SIR, AND I WONDER IF YOU'D *PARTICIPATE*.

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN ...THE *MIND*?

ARE YOUR INNERMOST THOUGHTS *INACCESSIBLE* TO YOU? IS YOUR HIGHER CONSCIOUSNESS *PADLOCKED*?

ARE YOUR *EMOTIONS* IN DEEP-FREEZE STORAGE?

IS YOUR BRAIN A MUSTY *ATTIC*, CLUTTERED WITH INTELLECTUAL *NOSTALGIA*?

WHO WANTS TA KNOW?

MY NAME IS *ALVIN*, SIR, BUT THAT'S COMPLETELY IRRELEVANT.

JUST *ONE* MORE QUESTION, SIR: ARE YOU FAMILIAR WITH *GNOSTICOLOGY?*

WRONG! IT JUST SO HAPPENS NOBODY NAMED "ALVIN" IS ALLOWED TO INQUIRE ABOUT MY MIND.

SO CHANGE YOUR NAME, OR *BUG OFF!*

NO? THEN LET LET ME GIVE YOU THE MOST IMPORTANT *GIFT* OF YOUR LIFE.

NATURALLY. A SALES PITCH. IT *HADDA* BE.

GNOSTICOLO

THE NEW SCIENCE OF

BRAIN LOCKSMITHING

SORRY. GONNA HAVETA *PASS* THIS TIME, ALVIN.

BUT YOU DON'T HAVE TO PAY FOR IT *NOW*. READ IT WHILE YOU *SLEEP*.

AND IF YOU *LIKE* IT, CHECK OUT OUR OPERATION WHEN WE REACH CLEVELAND.

UH...

NAH. HONEST. FERGET IT. I'M NOT UP TO A *NEW RELIGION* THIS WEEK. PLEASE--!

GNOSTICOLOGY *ISN'T* A RELIGION, SIR--

RIGHT--IT'S A *SCAM!* AN' I'M NOT *BUYIN'*-- GOT THAT, ALVIN?

BUT--

RIGHT ON, BROTHER DUCK!

LET NOT THE DEVIL TEMPT THEE ASTRAY WITH *HIP RHETORIC!*

THERE IS BUT *ONE WAY*--

--ONE PATH TO GLORY, ONE ROAD TO HEAVEN, *ONE* SUPERHIGHWAY TO SALVATION!

THERE'S *GOOD NEWS* FOR ONE AND ALL, BELIEVE ME, BRETHREN--

HE LOOKS *SO* FAMILIAR--I THINK I'VE SEEN HIM ON *TELEVISION!*

AND IT'S ALL *RIGHT HERE*--

--JAM-PACKED WITH INFO AND *COLOR* PHOTOGRAPH'S!

MARTYRDOM FOR THE MILLIONS

TELL HIM TO BACK OFF.

YOU'RE SUFFO-CATING.

YOUR NERVES CAN'T *TAKE* THIS.

WHIM.

WHAM.

FUNGA.

HARE!
HARE!
KRISHNU! KRISHNU!
WAITAMINIT! I SAW 'IM FIRST!
WHAT NEW BLASPHEMY IS THIS HERE??
NO! PLEASE! NOT ANOTHER ONE! AREN'T THERE ANY NON-BELIEVERS ON THIS BUS??
HARE! HARE! HARE! STEP RIGHT THIS WAY--!
TO SRI WITH LOVE
LOSE YOUR ILLUSION OF SEPAR-ATENESS-- YOUR EGO-- YOUR--
STOP!!
I DON'T WANNA THAW MY BRAIN--
I DON'T WANT A ROADMAP TO HEAVEN--AN' I DON'T WANNA FORGET WHO I AM!
I JUST WANNA BE LEFT ALONE! THAT'S ALL I EVER WANTED MY WHOLE LIFE!
IS THAT TOO MUCH TO ASK? HUH? IS IT??
YES.
OBVIOUSLY.
NO DUCK IS AN ISLAND.
NOR EVEN A PENINSULA.
AND BESIDES, IT'S NOT NORMAL.
ANYWAY, YOU'RE NEVER REALLY ALONE.
WE'RE WITH YOU.
ALWAYS.
FOR THE WHOLE RIDE.

FOUR HOURS, 21 MINUTES LATER; 5:06 A.M.:

"HEY!" A PASSENGER CRIES. "WE JUST CROSSED THE OHIO BORDER!"

YIPPEE.

MR. DUCK...?

YOU WOOK VEWY AGITATED.

I BET YOU'RE JUST WIKE ME--

YOU WISTEN MUCH TOO MUCH TO OTHER PEOPLE'S NONSENSE.

F'WINSTANCE...

THEY SAY I'M POSSESSED... BUT WEAWWY, I JUST MAKE FUNNY FACES...

--AND SIWWY NOISES.

=NURRRG=

IT'S VEWY THEWAPEUTIC.

AND IT KEEPS PEOPLE AWAY IN DWOVES.

WHY DON'T YOU TWY IT?

VEWY GOOD!

YOU'RE A NATUWAL!

NOW TWY ADDING SOUND!

YUBBA-WAB-HOOP-DIBBY!

GUMF! GUMF!

SEE? ISN'T IT A TEWWIFIC WEWEASE? HMMM?

YOU'RE THE ONLY PEWSON WHO EVEW TOOK MY ADVICE SEWIOUSLY.

YOU'VE GWEATLY BUTTWESSED MY SAGGING SEWF-CONCEPT, YES YOU HAVE.

AND NOW, IT'S TIME FOR SOME WEST AND WEWAXATION. SWEEP GOOD. SEE YOU IN CWEVEWAND.

YEAH...

SLEEP...

...DEEP, DREAMLESS SLEEP...

YEAH...YEAH... I COULD GO FOR SOME O' THAT...

TAKE YOUR HANDS OFF HER. YOU ANIMAL!!

=EEEEEK=

THUNK

MUNCHIES.

THE GRIPPE.

BROKEN DREAMS.

PIANO WIRE.

DEAD HORSES.

RESOLVED.

ATAVISM.

REPUG.

GOOZ.

INEFFABILITY.

FEDERAL RESERVE NOTE.

LAVE.

I KNEW OUR PATHS WOULD CROSS AGAIN IF I STAYED ON THE STRAIGHT AND NARROW AND YOU WADDLED YOUR WARPED AND CROOKED WAY!

LOOK, WORLD, ON THE HATEFUL, TWISTED, LEERING, LASCIVIOUS VISAGE OF FILTHY NASTINESS INCARNATE--

THE OVERALL HEAD OF THE MASSIVE INTERNATIONAL KIDNEY-POISONING CONSPIRACY!

=waaaugh=

HE USES SWEET, INNOCENT GIRLS LIKE THIS-- SUBVERTS THEIR INNATE NICENESS--

--HOOKS THEM ON FRIED FOODS, TOBACCO AND FAST LIVING--

--JUST TO GET AT THEIR KIDNEYS!!

OH, THAT IS WIDI-CUWOUS!

I DON'T BEWIEVE YOU! SO THEWE!

OH, YEAH? WELL, MAYBE YOU SHOULD TELL HER ABOUT YOUR LAST CONQUEST, EH? THE REDHEAD?

WHERE'D YOU DUMP HER--ONCE YOU GOT WHAT YOU WANTED?

WED-HEAD?

THAT DOES IT.

WHAP

YA FINALLY HIT A NERVE!!

LOOK, WORLD! THE VOICE OF TRUTH HAS DRIVEN HIM TO DESPERATION AND VIOLENCE!

ME?! TAILIN' YOU?? HA! THAT'S FUNNY, BEEFCAKES! I'M ROLLIN' IN THE AISLE!

HE'S BEEN FOLLOWING ME-- FROM CITY TO CITY--BUS TERMINAL TO BUS TERMINAL--

--HOPING TO CATCH ME OFF-GUARD, HARM ME BEFORE I COULD EXPOSE HIS HEINOUS MISDEEDS!

RIDICULE AND DENIAL-- THE FIRST REFUGE OF THE HOPELESSLY GUILT-RIDDEN!

BUT YOU CAN'T DENY THE EVI-DENCE OF YOUR EYES, CAN YOU WORLD?

WOULD A DECENT, HONORABLE, MORAL CREATURE--

--WHUP THE TAR OUT OF A HELPLESS OLD WOMAN IN PUBLIC?!

INDEED. YOU SHOULD LOVE THY NEIGHBOR AND BE TRUE TO THY SCHOOL.

LET HIM WHO IS WITHOUT SIN CAST THE--

THUD

YOU STAY OUTTA THIS, YOU DIRTY HIPPIE--THE FORCES OF GOODNESS CAN DO WITHOUT YOU!

CEASE THESE HOSTILITIES! I HAVE BERRIES AND NUTS AND *THREE WORLDS* TO SHARE!

HARE! HARE! GOO-GOO-GOO-*JOOB!*

DIDJA *HEAR* THAT, KIDNEY? THAT "GOO-GOO"? I CAN'T TAKE IT. I CAN'T *STAND* IT ANYMORE.

I REALLY CAN'T. I'M GOIN' *BERSERK.*

EXCUSES, BIRD OF PREY--MERE *EXCUSES!*

=Hmph= TYPICALLY UNENLIGHTENED...!

I SHALL ABORT THIS BRAWL BY FORCE OF *MIND!*

YES...YES... I'M *GETTING* IT... I'M ALL THE WAY TO *TRANS-PARENT...!*

SOCK

SMACK

HEY! WHAT'S THAT *BROUHAHA* BACK THERE? *QUIET!!*

--I'M TRYIN' TA *DRIVE* THIS--

THE BUS! ITS *KIDNEYS* HAVE BURST!!

BUSES DON'T *HAVE--*

NO! *NO!* MY MIND *BLEW* IT! FORGIVE ME.

BHM

SKREEEEEEEEEE

ONLY ASK FOR FORGIVENESS, AND IT IS *THINE!*

"*THINE?!*" NOBODY TALKS WIKE THAT ANYMOWE!

HARE REASONER! HARE REASONER!

OH, MY! IT WOOKS WIKE THE *END!*

GOODBYE, CWUEL WORLD--!

IT *FIGURES*: THE LAST SIGHT I'M GONNA SEE BEFORE I *DIE*--

--IS YOUR UGLY *FACE!!*

AND YET... IT COULD BE *WORSE.*

I MEAN... WHAT IF I'D HADDA WATCH MY *WHOLE LIFE* FLASH BEFORE ME?

NOW *THAT* WOULD B--

CRASH!

DOES A BUS SCUDDING OFF THE INTERSTATE AMID BILLOWS OF DUST AND SMOKE MAKE A **SOUND** *IF NO ONE IS PRESENT TO* **HEAR** *IT?*

YES.

AND IT'S DISGUSTING.

HOWEVER, WHEN THE CLOUDS OF VAPOR DISPERSE, ALL IS OMINOUS **SILENCE...**

...BUT THE **SMELL** *MAKES UP FOR IT.*

MORNING: BIRDS TWEET, PEOPLE EAT, AND THE SUN SMILES DOWN ON THE WRECKAGE.

=sigh=

RRRUMMM

NOTE THE "RRRUMMM."

CRANE CORP.

NEW EARS HAVE ARRIVED.

YOU MUST BE THE *LUCKIEST* DRIVER ON EARTH. NOT *ONE* SERIOUS INJURY IN THE BUNCH.

POLICE

AN' AS FOR THEM THREE *TROUBLEMAKERS*, PALS... DON'T YOU WORRY.

WE'LL TAKE 'EM OFF YOUR HANDS ...CART 'EM IN FOR THEIR OWN PRO-TECTION. =HA HA=

FIND SOMETHING TO *PIN* ON 'EM, I'LL BE ONLY TOO *GLAD* TO TESTIFY.

WE'LL LOOK GOOD AN' *HARD.*

POLICE DEPARTMENT

AFTER ALL, YOU CAN'T BE TOO *CAREFUL* WITH THESE TYPES.

"THEY MIGHT EVEN BE CRIMINALLY *INSANE.*"

HOW *IWONIC* TO BE POSSESSED BY THE *POWICE.* OH, WOE!

IS YOUR STWAIGHT JACKET COMFORTABLE, MR. DUCK?

YAAAAGGH

WHIM.

WHAM.

CURTAINS.

REVISIONISM.

UNIQUE.

UNFAIR.

NEXT: NIGHTSHIRT CITY!

HOWARD THE DUCK

30¢ CC | 12 MAY 02415

MARVEL® COMICS GROUP

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TRAPPED IN A WORLD HE NEVER MADE!

HOWARD THE DUCK™

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REMEMBER THE GOOD OLD DAYS, HOWARD?

BEFORE THEY PUT YOU AWAY...?

THE WORLD WAS YOUNG...

LOVE WAS IN BLOOM...

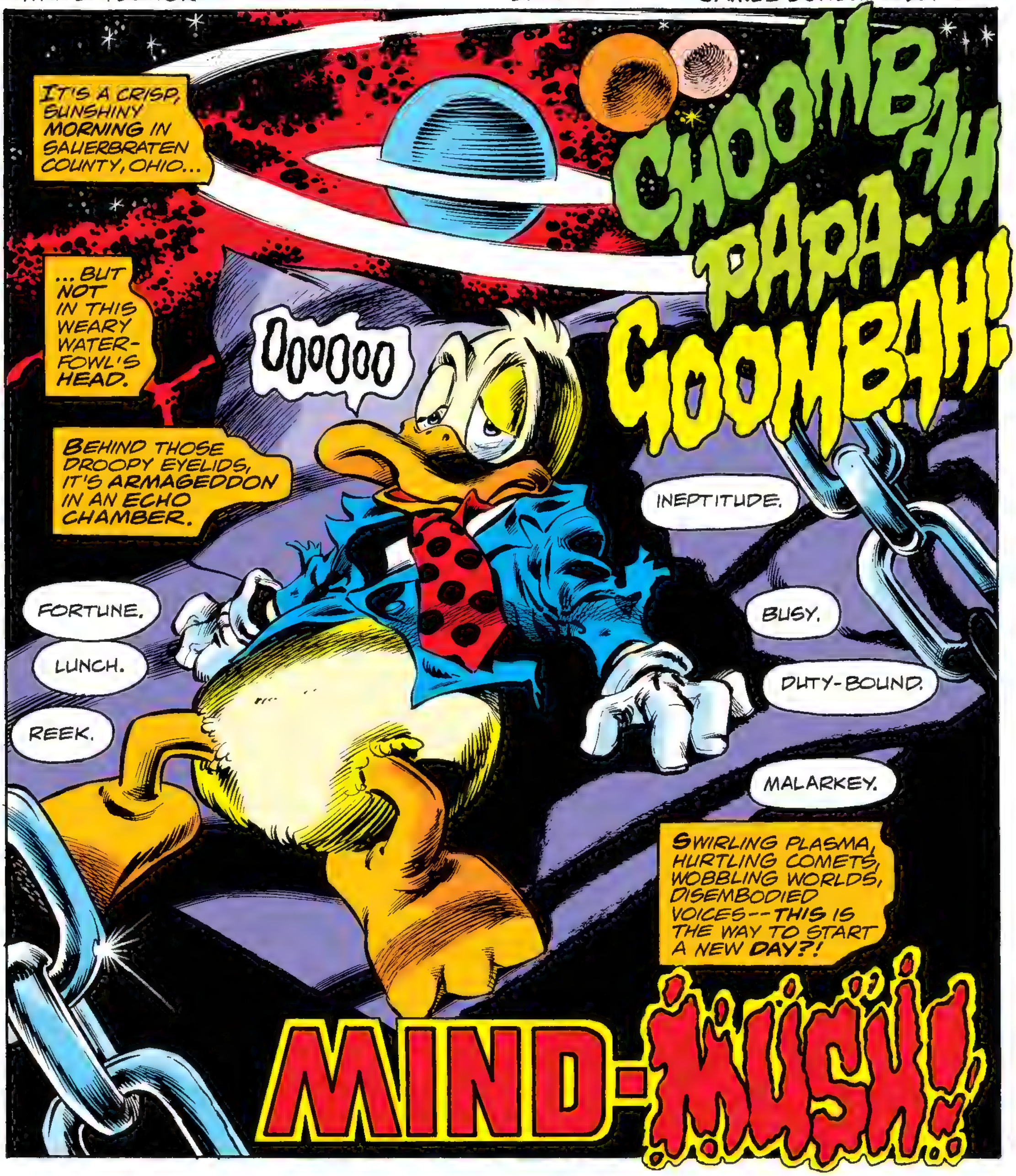
AND YOU HAD A MIND INSTEAD OF...

"DUCK'S-HEAD SOUP!"

From the time of his hatching, he was...different. A potentially brilliant scholar who dreaded the structured environment of school, he educated himself in the streets, taking whatever work was available, formulating his philosophy of self from what he learned of the world about him. And then the Cosmic Axis shifted...and that world *changed.* Suddenly, he was stranded in a universe he could not fathom. Without warning, he became a strange fowl in an even stranger land.

Stan Lee PRESENTS: HOWARD THE DUCK!™

STEVE GERBER WRITER/EDITOR • GENE COLAN ARTIST • STEVE LEIALOHA INKER • JIM NOVAK, LETTERER JANICE COHEN, COLORIST



RISE!
SHINE!
YEAH, YEAH... I HEAR YA...!
I...
I...
I...
...THINK I BROKE SOME-THIN'...!
NAH. IT BROKE ME.
HEE-HEE-HEE.
WHUM
HYUK! WHADDAYA KNOW! YO'RE A GOLDANGED DUCK!
AN' THIS... IS A JAIL CELL?
YUP! HERE, LEMME GIVE YA A HAND...!
I DIDN'T FIGGER YOU WAS EVER GONNA WAKE UP-- THE WAY YOU LOOKED LAST NIGHT.
ALL TRANKILIZED AN' STUFFED INTA THET STRAIT JACKET --HOO-EEE!
I DON'T SUPPOSE YOU'VE GOT A SPARE CIGAR ON YAH, HUH...?
NOPE. SORRY.
GUESS I CAN SPOT YA A SLIGHTLY DENTED COFFIN NAIL, THOUGH, IF YUH WANT...
SORRY 'BOUT THE SHAPE IT'S IN. THET CRUSH-PROOF BOX AIN'T NO PROTEC-TION--
--WHEN A FELLA'S FALLIN'- DOWN DRUNK.

:SNIF: YA MUST'A SQUASHED THE *FLAVOR* OUT OF 'EM, TOO....!

TASTES LIKE PENCIL SHAVINGS WRAPPED IN *BATHROOM* TISSUE...!

'COURSE IT DOES...

...IF YA DON'T *INHALE* IT!

OH. YEAH. RIGHT HERE G--

:COFF: WAAAAUGH :COFF:

Y-YOU CALL THAT A *SMOKE*?! :GASP: MY GOD...!

I F-FEEL LIKE I JUST SUCKED IN HALF OF *NEW JERSEY*!

TELL IT TO THE *JUDGE*, PAL. MAYBE HE'LL SYMPATHIZE. HE WAS *BORN* THERE.

YOU CAN CLEAR OUT, TOO, GUMPY. SEEYA *TONIGHT*.

PROB'LY, FRED. THANKS.

THE PAUNCHY PATROLMAN ESCORTS HOWARD UP THREE FLIGHTS OF COLD CONCRETE STAIRS--TO THE BENCH OF THE HONORABLE *HIRAM* "DON'T-GIMME-NO" *BALOGNA*, HANGIN' JUDGE OF THE COUNTY'S *TRAFFIC COURT*.

GOOD HEAVENS!

UH-OH.

ASKANCE

AFOUL.

REPROBATE.

ADJUDICATE.

RELEGATE.

NUG.

GOODNESS GWACIOUS! MR. DUCK! HOW DWAWN AND BEDWAGGLED YOU WOOK!

WHAT HAVE THEY DONE TO YOU?

YOU KIDDIN', LADY?

ALL WE DID WAS CLEAN 'IM UP--

--AN TRY TA GET THAT BLAMED COSTUME OFF 'IM!

WELL, I THINK THEY SHOULD'VE TRIED HARDER-- SKINNED THE BEAST ALIVE, IF NECESSARY.

HUH? WHA--NO! YOU CAN'T BE--

YOU!

I CALL IT THE "MAMIE EISENHOWER LOOK" DO YOU APPROVE--

--KIDNEY THIEF?

OKAY, CAN THE GAB! COURT'S IN SESSION!

FIRST CASE-- COUNTY VERSUS H. DUCK, W. WESTER, AND S. BLOTTE!

RAP

YOU THREE ARE CHARGED WITH DISTURBING THE PEACE ABOARD A BLACK DOG BUS EN ROUTE TO CLEVELAND, THUS DISTRACTING THE DRIVER AND ENDANGERING YOUR FELLOW PASSENGER'S LIVES!

THESE ARE SWORN DEPOSITIONS TO THAT EFFECT FROM EYEWITNESSES.

H. DUCK IS FURTHER CHARGED WITH RESISTING ARREST. SAYS HERE THEY HADDA STRAIT-JACKET AND SEDATE YOU. MY, MY!

HEH

SHHH-- DON'T... DON'T... WOSE YOUR TEMPER.

FRANKLY, I'M *MIGHTY* ANXIOUS TO HEAR *YOUR* SIDE O' THE STORY. WHO'D CARE TO SPEAK *FIRST*?

WELL...

ME!!

I WAS ONLY TWYING TO *STOP* THE HOSTIWITIES! YOU SEE, I *MUST* GET TO CWEVE-WAND IN A HUWWY--

--TO BE *EXOWCISED.* MY PAWENTS SAY I'M POSSESSED BY THE *DEVIL*, AND--

=waaaugh=

=AHEM= THAT WILL *DO*, MISS WESTER. YOU MAY BE SEATED. MISS BLOTTE, HAVE *YOU* ANYTHING TO SAY IN YOUR DEFENSE?

YEAH, BEEF-CAKES --GO *TO* IT!

TELL 'IM ABOUT THE KIDNEY-POISONING CONSPIRACY--

--SO US *INNO-CENT* TYPES CAN BE ON OUR WAY!

YOUR HONOR... *LOOK* AT ME.

I ASK YOU: COULD THIS FRAIL OLD WOMAN *POSSIBLY* HAVE INSTIGATED A *BRAWL* IN THE AISLE OF A *BUS*?

WELL...

PURELY A RHETORICAL QUESTION, YOUR HONOR.

THE ANSWER IS *NO.* I'M TOO SICKLY, TOO WEAK, AND BY NATURE TOO *GENTEEL.* RUFFIANISM *REPELS* ME.

I SHRINK AT THE VERY *THOUGHT* OF GOUGING, MAIMING, OR MANGLING MY FELLOW MAN.

NOT THAT MINE HAS BEEN AN *EASY* LIFE, YOUR HONOR. OH, YES... I'VE HAD MY SHARE OF *SORROW!*

1941

"I'M A POOR FARMGIRL AT HEART, YOUR HONOR, THE SAME, NAIVE IMPRESSION-ABLE LASS--

"--WHO ANSWERED THE DOOR--

"--ON THAT FATEFUL DAY THE META-PHYSICAL BOOK SALESMAN CAME TO CALL.

MR. BLOTTE, I REPRESENT --OH! 'SCUZE ME! YOUR DADDY HOME?

WHY-- NO.

GOOD! I THINK I'M IN LOVE!

OOOOH! I BEG YOUR--

I...

I'M NOT THAT KIND OF--

AW, WHAT THE HEY--!

"BEFORE MY HEAD COULD STOP SPINNING, HE'D SOLD ME A BOOK--AT A GENEROUS DISCOUNT--

CLEVELAND

"--AND APPLIED THE PURCHASE PRICE TO OUR 'TICKET TO FREE-DOM' AS ELMER CALLED IT.

"HE DRAPED ME IN SILKS, PLIED ME WITH FINE WINE...!

"CLEVELAND-- THE BIG CITY! BRIGHT LIGHTS, GLAMOR, THE THRILL OF ROMANCE!

"WE CAVORTED ALL DAY AND DANCED 'TIL DAWN! PLUSH NIGHTCLUBS, GOURMET CUISINE...

"...AND ONLY THE BEST HOTELS.

"AND THEN-- MY WORLD COLLAPSED!

"I WAS HIS QUEEN IN A WONDERLAND OF LOVE!

ELMER... DARLING...?

"I AWOKE ONE MORNING --AND MY LOVE HAD FLED--

"...LEAVING ONLY A NOTE, MY BOOK--

"...AND OUR UNPAID BILL.

Sorry sweets I've been drafted. See to the tab. - E.

OH =SOB= NO!

"SUDDENLY, I WAS ALONE, ADRIFT, AND HELPLESS-- IN A BLEAK, UNCARING WORLD!"

=SOB=

=SOB=

ELMER, MY ELMER, YOU-- =SOB=

=SOB=

=SOB= FORGIVE ME, YOUR HONOR. I'M AFRAID... I STILL MISS HIM SO.

I STILL HAVE HIS FAREWELL NOTE, YOUR HONOR.

AND I STILL CARRY THAT BOOK ON MY PERSON AT ALL TIMES.

I'VE TRIED TO LIVE MY LIFE BY IT...!

THE HUMAN KIDNEY

SEAT OF THE SOUL

HAVE MERCY, YOUR HONOR!

=SOB= COULD A WOMAN WHO'S WAITED **36 YEARS** FOR HER MAN TO RETURN FROM **WORLD WAR II**...

...COMMIT THE CRIME OF WHICH **I** AM ACCUSED?

=SOB=

NO, NO, NO... OF **COURSE** NOT, DEAR LADY!

WHY...I'M ASHAMED TO HAVE PUT YOU THROUGH THIS DREADFUL ORDEAL.

ALLOW ME TO ASSIST YOU TO THE **DOOR**...!

=SOB=

=SOB=

=BOO= =HOO=

NO!!

STOP!! WHAT'RE YA **DOIN'?!** SHE STARTED IT **ALL!!**

STRAP 'ER **DOWN!** RUBBER-HOSE 'ER!! **MAKE 'ER TALK!!** DON'T--

=WAAAUGH=

POOR, DELUDED CREATURE!

HE DESERVES OUR **COMPASSION**, NOT OUR HATRED. TRY TO...**HELP** HIM.

AND SO, WHEN THE JUDGE RETURNS TO THE **BENCH**...

WRAP

WRAP

SILENCE! ORDER IN THE COURT! I'VE REACHED MY JUDGEMENT!

"THIS VIOLENT OUTBURST, YOUR REFUSAL TO REMOVE THAT FARCICAL **DUCK** GARB, AND MISS WESTER'S APPARENT BELIEF IN HER OWN POSSESSION BY **DEMONS**--

"--IMPEL ME TO **CONCUR** WITH THE ARRESTING OFFICERS THAT YOU BOTH MAY BE DANGEROUSLY **UNBALANCED!**

"ACCORDINGLY, I SENTENCE YOU EACH TO **NINETY DAYS'** CONFINEMENT...

"... SAID TERMS TO BE SERVED UNDER OBSERVATION IN THIS COUNTY'S MENTAL FACILITY."

AND THERE THEY GO... FURTHER PROOF, IF ANY WERE NECESSARY...

...THAT WHOLESOME NICENESS ALWAYS... ALWAYS!--TRIUMPHS OVER DEPRAVED NASTINESS.

WATCH OUT FOR YOUR KIDNEYS, BOYS 'N' GIRLS!

=SIGH= MAYBE IT WON'T BE SO BAD. YOU WOOK WIKE YOU COULD USE A WONG WEST.

WATCHA THINK? HMMM...?

QUACKER OAT'S

MUSH.

OVER.

RUNNETH.

GOOZ.

NOOP.

ATROCITY.

IT'S SO CONFUSING... WIFE, I MEAN.

NOW IT JUST PWOCEEDS ON ITS OWN... WITHOUT WHYME OR WEASON.

SAUERBRATEN COUNTY MENTAL FACILITY

I WONDEW... WILL THEY EXOWCISE ME... OR JUST WOCK US AWAY?

=waaaugh=

MISS.

CUMBERSOME.

HIT.

STALINIST.

POLICE

HOKUM.

HI-DE-HI-DE-HO.

NEWT.

SHORTLY, INSIDE...

LOOKIT, BARBARA-- HE'S A DUCK!!

A DRAKE, TECHNICALLY-- A MALE OF THE SPECIES--SO THANKFULLY HE'S YOUR CHARGE.

YOU'LL BE UNDER MY CARE, WINDA. I'M NURSE BARBARA.

AND LET'S UNDERSTAND ONE ANOTHER FROM THE START. I'M A STRICT DISCIPLINARIAN.

PROCESS MEN

ME TOO, DUCK.

AND FORBEARANCE IS NOT ONE OF MY VIRTUES!

PROCESSING WOMEN

"PWOCESSING?" ISN'T THAT WHAT THEY DO TO CHEESE?

HMMM?

OH, I SEE-- YES I DO!

I SHOULD KEEP MY TWAP SHUT, HUH?

BEHIND THE SCREEN, JACK.

YOU'LL FIND YOUR NEW WEARING APPAREL READY AND WAITING!

OKAY... BUT CALL ME "HOWARD"-- PLEASE?

WALTZ

DISCOMFIT.

BUT YOU'D BE AN IDIOT TO RESIST.

WHY-- THAT YOUR NAME?

YEAH...I THINK, SO, ANYWAY.

I'M PRETTY FUZZY ON JUST ABOUT EVERYTHING THOUGH, THESE DAYS.

THAT'S WHY WE GOT RULES AROUND HERE, HOWARD--WE DO THE THINKING SO YOU DON'T HAVETA.

JUST REMEMBER-- NO NOISE, NO VISITORS, NO SMOKING--

NO SMOKING?!

--EXCEPT AT DESIGNATED TIMES... NO UNAUTHORIZED PHONE CALLS... NO LEAVING THE COMPOUND...

UH-HUH... ANY YESSES IN YOUR REPERTOIRE, PAL?

NO.

AND MY HANDLE'S CECIL-- GOT THAT?

DEPENDS. IS THERE A "NO HILARITY" RULE?

DON'T GET WISE, HOWARD. I WANNA TREAT YOU GOOD. BUT WE'RE UNDER-STAFFED, SEE?

I GOT LOTS O' PATIENTS TO LOOK AFTER. AND FRANKLY...

BUMP BUMP

I PLAY FAVOR-ITES!

WELL. I MEAN...

THAT'S ONLY HUMAN, RIGHT?

RIGHT ON.

SO I DON'T WANNA HEAR NO ARGUMENTS...

...WHEN I TELL YOU TO STEP INSIDE THIS ROOM...

...AND WAIT 'TIL DOC AVERY GETS 'ROUND TO YOUR INTERVIEW!

FLINCH

GUTS.

PORTENT.

LOCK.

DEAD.

BOLT.

CLICK

EULP

ALONE.

AT LAST.

PEACE.

PIANISSIMO.

SUCKER.

AAAH, EASE UP, WILLYA.

IT'S JUST WHAT YOU WANTED, ISN'T IT?

THE SAFE DARK.

THE COZY WARM.

YEAH...!

NOBODY AROUND TO TORMENT YOU...

...EXCEPT US.

TIME PASSES. HOW MUCH?

I DUNNO.

TOO MUCH.

HOURS.

MAYBE DAYS.

NAH...!

OKAY, WEEKS.

FACE IT.

THEY'VE FORGOTTEN YOU.

WHA'--?

THEY'VE ALL GONE HOME.

YOO-HOO-- DOCTOR--?

SEE? NO ANSWER.

THEY'VE LEFT YOU TO STARVE...

...OR SUFFOCATE...

...OR WORSE...

HALLO?! ANYBODY HOME??

DOCTOR? CECIL? WINDA?

ANY BODY?

THUMP THUMP

HALP!

NOW, NOW... LET'S NOT *PANIC.*

EPOXY! EPOXY!

HISTRIONICS WILL AVAIL US NAUGHT.

YEAH--RIGHT --GOTTA STAY CALM-- *RATIONAL*--!

MAYBE I COULD *CLAW* MY WAY OUT--!

HOWARD, IT'S--*OH!* EXCUSE *ME!*

I'VE BROUGHT SOMETHING TO *CALM* YOU. JUST GULP THESE DOWN, AND--

WHUMP

PILLS?

UH-UH! NOPE! NO WAY! *SORRY!* I HATE THE WRETCHED THINGS!

YOU GOTTA TWIST MY ARM TO GET ME TO TAKE *ASPIRIN!*

=SIGH= OKAY... I CAN'T *FORCE* YOU!..

BUT YOU CAN'T SEE THE *DOCTOR* 'TIL YOU'VE HAD YOUR MEDICATION.

WHA'--?

WAIT-- DON'T LEAVE ME--NOT AGAIN--

--NOT AGAIN--!

CECIL--?

PLEASE--?

I'LL GO--

CLICK

--CRAZY.

STUBBORN ONE, EH?

NAH... NOTHIN' OUTTA THE ORDINARY.

WATCH: 9--8-- 7--6--

5--4-3--

--2 --1.

--ZERO.

HAAA

BUT YOU *DID* CONSENT TO THE TRIP TO CLEVELAND TO BE *EXORCISED*, DID YOU N--

RING

EXCUSE ME A MOMENT...

YES, THIS IS HE-- OH! HELLO, PHIL-- YOU DID?--I SEE!

NO, THAT WON'T BE NECESSARY. THANK YOU.

WELL, WINDA-- WE'VE CHECKED ON THE *HOME ADDRESS* YOU GAVE US.

IT'S A *VACANT LOT.*

OH, NO!!

WEBSTER, W.

THEY PUT ME ON THE *BUS*-- PACKED UP *EVEWYTHING*--EVEN THE *HOUSE*--

--AND *MOVED AWAY!!* I'M AWONE! FOWSAKEN! *MAWOONED!*

NOW, WINDA, ARE YOU *SURE?*

MIGHTN'T YOU HAVE GIVEN US AN *INCORRECT* ADDRESS, OR--?

NO! *NO!* THE DEVIL POSSESSED ME AND MY EMBAW-WASSED PAWENTS HAVE *FWED*--DIS-OWNED ME!!

WHERE CAN I *GO?* WHAT CAN I *DO??* OH, *WOE!*

RIGHT NOW, YOU CAN GO WITH YOUR NURSE TO YOUR *ROOM!*

IN THE MORNING, WE'LL RUN SOME TESTS--AND IF IT'LL MAKE YOU *FEEL* BETTER--

--WE'LL EVEN CONSULT AN *EXORCIST* FOR AN OPINION.

WEAWWY?! OH, THANK YOU!!

OUTSIDE, IN AVERY'S ***WAITING ROOM...***

HOWARD! HOW *WOVEWY* TO SEE YOU!

IT'S YOUR FRIEND, HOWARD. SAY "HELLO."

HAH...?

THEY'WE GOING TO **HEWP** ME! THEY'WE GOING TO GIVE ME TESTS AND **EXOWCISE** ME!

ISN'T IT **WONDEWFUL?!**

HAH...?

GEE! WHAT'S **WONG** WITH HIM? HE'S TOTAWWY **UNWESPONSIVE!**

THAT'S DR. AVERY'S CONCERN, WINDA-- **NOT YOURS!** COME!

PLEASE BE **SEATED**--"MR. DUCK!"

I SUPPOSE YOU'LL EXPECT SOME **REACTION,** WHEN I TURN TO **FACE** YOU, EH?

HAH...?

WELL, MY FRIEND--SORRY TO **DISAPPOINT** YOU...

BUT MY SON **RONALD** WORE THE **SAME** COSTUME LAST HALLOWEEN.

VERY **REALISTIC!**

...BUT IT'LL HAVE **NO** SHOCK VALUE IN THIS OFFICE. **CLEAR?**

HAH...?

GOOD! NOW THAT **THAT'S** OUT OF THE WAY, LET'S DISCUSS SOMETHING MORE INTERESTING.

WERE YOUR **PARENTS** AS SHORT AS **YOU** ARE, HOWARD?

AiiiEEEEEEEEEEEE

GOOD HEAVENS!

HAH...?

I JUST WONDERED WHETHER YOU WERE **SELF-CONSCIOUS** ABOUT YOUR **HEIGHT.** MANY PATIENTS **COMPENSATE** BY ADOPTING A FLAMBOYANT STYLE OF--

HAH...?

IT CAME FROM THE **HALLWAY**-- OUT HERE--!

DR. MORTON AVERY IS A **GOOD** PSYCHIATRIST. HE STUDIED THE FREUDIANS, THE BEHAVORISTS, AND THE SO-CALLED "THIRD FORCE" IN **DEPTH**. HE'S EVEN SCANNED **CASTENEDA**. AND HE'S CURRENT ON ALL THE MAJOR **JOURNALS**.

BUT AWARE AS HE IS OF ALL THE NEW **THERAPIES** OF THE COLLECTIVE UNCONSCIOUS, OF ARCHETYPES, OF NONORDINARY REALITIES--

NOTHING IN HIS READING HAS PREPARED HIM TO DEAL WITH THE SWIRLING, SEETHING, SAVAGE **NIGHTMARE** RISING IN BILLOWS FROM WINDA'S **SKULL!**

HALLO...?

HAH...?

NEXT CHAINS, LEATHER, AND PETUNIAS!

HOWARD THE DUCK™

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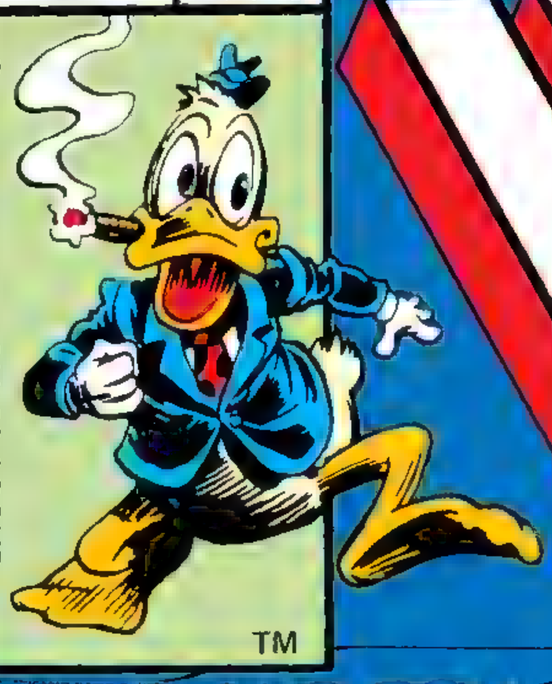

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TRAPPED IN A WORLD HE NEVER MADE!

HOWARD THE DUCK™

KISS AND TELL IN THE PSYCHO-WARD!

OMEN OF AN EXORCIST!

From the time of his hatching, he was...different. A potentially brilliant scholar who dreaded the structured environment of school, he educated himself in the streets, taking whatever work was available, formulating his philosophy of self from what he learned of the world about him. And then the Cosmic Axis shifted...and that world *changed*. Suddenly, he was stranded in a universe he could not fathom. Without warning, he became a strange fowl in an even stranger land.

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WELCOME TO THE CORRIDORS OF THE LOCAL **MENTAL FACILITY!** ORDINARILY, THE AMBIENCE IN THESE HALLWAYS IS AS HEAVILY **SEDATED** AS THE PATIENTS.

BUT NOT TODAY.

TODAY, IT'S **PARTY TIME!** THE RIGIDLY-ENFORCED TRANQUILITY HAS BEEN **SHATTERED** BY THE EMERGENCE OF FOUR SILVER-AND-BLACK **BAROQUES** FROM WINDA WESTER'S **HEAD!**

HAH...?

AW-*RIIIGHT!* SAUERBRATEN COUNTY, OHIO-- LET THIS OLD COSMOS...

ROCK, ROLL OVER, AND WRITHE!

THAT SOMEWHAT ABSTRUSE, IF **UN-SUBTLE**, PRONOUNCEMENT IS THEIR FIRST AND **LAST** BEFORE ASSUMING SINGLE-FILE FORMATION AND COMMENCING THEIR MARCH ON... THE **DUCK!**

JEEZ... **LOOKIT** THIS!

OKAY, YOU GUYS **--FREEZE!**

HOLD IT RIGHT WHERE YA **ARE** OR WE'LL **SH--**

--UCKS.

THE SECURITY GUARDS FREEZE IN THEIR TRACKS... EYES OPEN, MINDS **AWAKE** BUT SOMEHOW UNABLE TO ISSUE COMMANDS TO THEIR NUMB, STIFFENED BODIES.

HOWARD, MEANWHILE, WATCHES WITH DRUG-INDUCED **APATHY...**

...AS THE **CATMAN**, THE **DEMON**, THE **STARCHILD**, AND THE **SPACE-ACE** MOVE IN FOR--

--THE WORD!

WHEN YOU MEET **REALITY** HEAD-ON **--KISS** IT, SMACK IN THE FACE!

THAT'S THE WORD! PASS IT ON!

HAH...?

MESSAGE CONCLUDED, THE FOUR PHANTASMS RETREAT INTO THE COILS OF SMOKE. "REMEMBER THE WORD," THE STARCHILD'S JABBING FINGER SEEMS TO SAY. "KISS IT, YOU'RE THE TARGET, BUT YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE A SITTING DUCK!"

THE DEMON SNARLS AND ROARS IN AFFIRMATION!

AND THEN, WITH ONE AWFUL WHOOSH, THEY ARE DRAWN BACK INTO WINDA'S BRAIN.

THE HOSPITAL PERSONNEL STRAIN TO RECOVER FROM SHOCK, WONDERMENT, AND SMOKE INHALATION.

THE STORM SUBSIDES.

HOWARD IS LEFT WITH HIS STUPOR AND A SEQUIN OF QUESTIONABLE WISDOM.

HAH...?

SNAP

ONE INTREPID INTERN FARES BETTER THAN MOST, GATHERING ENOUGH OF HIS WITS ABOUT HIM TO SNATCH A NIKON FROM THE RESEARCH SECTION...

...AND RECORD THE EVENT FOR POSTERITY.

NOT THAT POSTERITY IS THE ONLY FELLOW INTERESTED:

SO! ZIS OCCURRED SREE DAYS AGO, DURING MEIN ABSENCE. UND SINCE...?

NOTHING, DR. REICH. WE HAVE SUBJECTED MISS WESTER TO EXHAUSTIVE EXAMINATION...

...AND FOUND NO PHYSIOLOGICAL EXPLANATION FOR THE PHENOMENON.

AH, BUT YOU'VE UNCOVERED ZOME JUICY TIDBIT, HAVEN'T YOU?

I CAN TELL BY YOUR ZMIRK!

MAY I HAVE DER ENVELOPE, PLEASE?

X-RAYS #62 H.D ROOM 14-A

ACH DU LIEBER! ZIS IS DER X-RAY OF DER DUMMKOPF IN ZE DUCK SUIT?

CORRECT. WHAT WE ASSUMED TO BE A DWARF MASQUERADING AS A DUCK APPEARS IN FACT TO BE--

QVIET YOUR VERDAMMT VERBOSE MOUTH! VHERE ARE ZEY NOW-- DER FRAULEIN UND DER DUCK?

IN ISOLATION-- TOGETHER.

DR. AVERY--AGAINST MY ADVICE--HAS SUMMONED AN AUTHORITY ON DEMONOLOGY TO DETERMINE IF WINDA IS POSSESSED, AS SHE ASSERTS.

I FELT YOU, AS DIRECTOR OF THIS FACILITY SHOULD BE CONSULTED FIRST.

MOST COMMENDABLE, NURSE. BUT REMOVE YOUR PERSON FROM ZIS DESK--SCHNELL!!

≥GASP≤ YES, HERR DOCTOR! FORGIVE ME!

UND NEVER ASK FORGIVENESS! NEVER!! BE STRONG! MIGHT MEANS RIGHT--

--UND RIGHT MEANS NEVER HAVING TO SAY YOU'RE SORRY!

YES, HERR DOKTOR!

GOOT! NOW GO--!

INFORM AVERY VE SHALL INVITE AN EXPERT OF MEIN CHOOSING. OH, AND BARBARA--

NEVER VEAR ZAT FRILLY OUTFIT IN MEIN PRESENCE AGAIN. YOU KNOW VHICH ONE I PREFER.

YES, HERR DOKTOR. I KNOW.

GOOT! NOW, RAUSE MIT YOU! UND DON'T DISAPPOINT ME!

I WON'T, MY DARLING-- FEAR NOT! UNLIKE THE OTHERS, I SHALL EARN YOUR ADORATION!

OUR IMPUDENT DR. AVERY WILL BE TAUGHT THE PRICE OF DEFYING THE FUTURE MASTER OF THE WORLD!

MEANWHILE, SEVERAL STORIES BELOW...

YOUR TWANQUILIZER MUST BE WEARING OFF, HOWARD. YOU'WE A NEWVOUS WECK!

CLAM DIG.

MORDANT.

INFIRM.

THREAD.

STIMULUS.

GARNISH.

SHIN.

DIG.

IMP.

PALE.

WAN.

WAAAUGH

AND YOU'WE MAKING ME NEWVOUS, TOO. YOU'WE A'WAYS SO DISTWACTED! SIT DOWN! TALK TO ME!!

CLUMP

REAP.

SOW.

KISS IT.

TRIP.

I'M SOWWY-- I CAN'T HEWP IT--I'M VEWY, VEWY AFWAID--!

BESIDES--THE FWICTION OF YOUR FEET IS EWODING THE PADDING IN THIS CELL!

THAT WAS A JOKE... SUPPOS-EDWY.

COULD YOU JUST GWOAN A WITTLE, HUH? WET ME KNOW I EXIST? HMMMMM?

:GROAN:

HOWZAT?

PATHETIC, RIGHT?

AT WEAST IT'S A WESPONSE! NOW, WET'S HAVE SOME CHIT-CHAT!

MUST I WESORT TO VIOWENCE BEFORE YOU TALK TO ME? IS MY CWAVING FOR COMPANION-SHIP TOO BWATENT, OR WHAT?

NAH-- IT'S JUST--THERE'S THESE OTHER VOICES, SEE?

AND THIS RUNNING VISUAL COMMENTARY IN MY MIND...!

I'VE BEEN THINKING--MAYBE EVERYBODY'S BEEN RIGHT-- BEV, THE DOCTORS, EVEN THE KIDNEY LADY--!

MAYBE I AM GOIN' CRACKERS!

≷CHOKE≷ I KNEW I'D COME TO THIS--I WAS NEVER CUT OUT FOR SANITY--COULDN'T HANDLE THE PRESSURE--!

DITTO FOR SUCCESS--MAYBE DITTO FOR LIVING--!

"NUTS, I NEVER ASKED TO BE HATCHED--LET ALONE MY PARENTS' FIRST-HATCHED, THE LUCKLESS, INHERITOR OF ALL THEIR GREAT EXPECTATIONS!

"THEY WANTED ME TA BE A LAWYER! MY FIRST APTITUDE TEST PEGGED ME FOR A MORTICIAN --REALLY!

"BUT I THINK EVEN AS A KID--I WANTED TO BE A DERELICT. I LIKED THE HOURS.

"COULDN'T QUITE RECONCILE THAT WITH MY MIDDLE-CLASS UPBRINGING, THOUGH--SO AFTER A SHORT, UNDISTINGUISHED ACADEMIC CAREER--

"I TRIED FOLK-SINGING. DIDN'T PAY AS WELL AS BEIN' A BUM--BUT IT SATISFIED SOME OR ANOTHER ARTISTIC URGE, TEMPORARILY.

"AFTER THAT, I TRIED MY HAND AT EVERYTHING FROM POETRY TO CONSTRUCTION--AND DISCOVERED MY ONLY TALENT WAS JOB-HUNTING!

"THEN ONE DAY, THE COSMIC WHATSIS SHIFTED--AN' SUDDENLY I WAS WADIN' THROUGH A SWAMP INSTEAD O' POUNDIN' THE PAVEMENT!

"YEP, HERE I WAS ON YOUR WORLD --AND THE TERM 'MISFIT' TOOK ON WHOLE NEW VISTAS OF MEANING!

"≷WAAAAUGH≷

"≷CHOKE≷ ≷SOB≷"

AWWW--THEWE, THEWE! IT'LL ALL BE OH-KAY... EVENTUAWWY.

YOU JUST HAVE TO FIND OUT WHO YOU ARE--WHAT YOU WANT OUT OF WIFE.

LIFE'S TOO FAR IN THE FUTURE TO THINK ABOUT! RIGHT NOW, I COULD USE A GOOD CIGAR!

WHILE, ON A FLOOR SOMEWHERE **BETWEEN** THE DEVILISH DIRECTOR AND THE DEEP BLUE DUCK...

I'LL THANK YOU TO **KNOCK** BEFORE ENTERING THIS OFFICE, NURSE!

I'M ENGAGED IN A **PRIVATE** CONVERSATION, AND I WILL NOT **TOLERATE**--

ORDERS FROM THE **DIRECTOR**, DR. AVERY --**URGENT!**

YOU'RE TO **CANCEL** ANY INVITATION YOU MAY HAVE PROFFERED TO ANY **EXORCIST**, OR RISK--

I'M AFRAID THE COUNTERMAND COMES TOO **LATE**, BARBARA.

MEET MY FRIEND AND FORMER **COLLEAGUE** AT GATEWAY UNIVERSITY...

...MR. **DAIMON HELLSTROM!**

MY PLEASURE, NURSE.

SURELY YOUR DIRECTOR WOULD NOT OBJECT TO MY MERELY **EXAMINING** THE GIRL.

NO CHARGE, NO OBLIGATION, I SUPPOSE?

NATURALLY. AND HE IS FREE, OF COURSE, TO OBTAIN ANOTHER OPINION.

OH, VERY WELL, THEN-- AS LONG AS YOU'RE ALREADY **HERE**.

GOOD!

OH, DAIMON-- SOMETHING **ELSE** YOU SHOULD KNOW.

WE'VE ANOTHER RATHER **UNUSUAL** PATIENT WITH MISS. WESTER. HE--

NO, YOU'D BEST SEE FOR **YOURSELF**.

YOU WON'T GET **AWAY** WITH THIS, AVERY. THE DIRECTOR KNOWS ALL **ABOUT** YOU--

--AND YOUR **AMBITIONS!**

DO TELL...?

PRESENTLY...

WINDA, HOWARD-- THIS IS--

BY THE SEVEN CIRCLES!

Y-YOU ARE-- A DUCK!!

YEAH. AIN'T IT GREAT HOW SOME THINGS IN THE UNIVERSE REMAIN *CONSTANT.*

DAIMON IS AN AUTHORITY ON DEMONOLOGY AND EXORCISM, WINDA.

HE'S HERE TO *EXAMINE* YOU.

WEAWWY?!

YOU'WE GOING TO *DISPOSSESS* ME?

DID DR. AVEWY TELL YOU HOW I GOT POSSESSED AND MY TEWWIFIED PAWENTS PUT ME ON A BUS TO CWEVEWAND TO BE EXOWCISED...

...AND HOW I JUST WIKE TO MAKE FUNNY FACES AND SIWWY *NOISES...*

...ONWY MY PAWENTS THOUGHT IT WAS THE DEVIL, *MM-HM,* AND THE BUS CWASHED, AND--AND--

NO. HE DID NOT. PERHAPS *YOU* CAN TELL ME... *LATER.*

BUT FOR NOW, WINDA, PLEASE REMAIN ABSOLUTELY *SILENT.* THE EXAMINATION REQUIRES ONLY A *MOMENT...*

...BUT A *DELICATE* MOMENT, IN WHICH I MUST REACH BEHIND YOUR EYES AND TOUCH YOUR VERY *SOUL.*

OH, MY GOODNESS!

PRECISELY 33 HEARTBEATS LATER...

IT IS DONE.

SNAP

AND BY NO MEANS IS MS. WESTER UNDER DEMONIC INFLUENCE, DOCTOR.

SHE DOES POSSESS CERTAIN LATENT PSYCHIC TALENTS, HOWEVER... WHICH LIKELY ACCOUNT FOR THE EPISODE IN THE CORRIDOR.

I WOULD HYPOTHESIZE THAT IN A MOMENT OF EXTREME STRESS HER MIND REACHED OUT...

...AND MOMENTARILY ESTABLISHED CONTACT WITH SOME PARALLEL REALITY.

AN UNUSUAL PHENOMENON AND VERY UNLIKELY TO RECUR.

AND HER PARENTS' CONTENTION THAT SHE IS POSSESSED...?

THE DEVIL, DR. AVERY, TOO OFTEN RECEIVES CREDIT FOR THE CREATIVE BEHAVIOR OF HUMANS.

WINDA IS SOMEWHAT... UNCONVENTIONAL, BUT HARDLY EVIL.

AGREED, DAIMON! THANK YOU!

WINDA, I'LL GET PROCEDURES UNDERWAY IMMEDIATELY TO SECURE YOUR RELEASE.

CLAP

CLAP

OH, HOOWAY, HOOWAY!!

UH, DOC--WAITAMINIT--WHAT ABOUT ME?

I DON'T WANNA SPEND THE REST O' MY LIFE IN HERE, EITHER.

DOC...?

WE'LL SEE...!

I'M MORE THAN MILDLY CURIOUS ABOUT WINDA'S *COMPANION*, DR. AVERY.

WHAT DO YOU KNOW OF HIS-- *ITS*-- ORIGINS?

DID YOU FOLLOW LAST YEAR'S *PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN* AT ALL, DAIMON?

NO, NOT CLOSELY--!

WELL, THERE WAS A MINOR CANDIDATE WHO RAN UNDER THE NAME "HOWARD THE DUCK"...!

HE GOT A FEW WRITE-UPS --EVEN A SPOT ON WALTER KLONDIKE'S NEWS--

BUT, LIKE *MOST* OF THE PUBLIC I ASSUMED IT WAS ALL AN ELABORATE *GAG*--

--RATHER LIKE THE *FIRESIGN THEATRE'S* "PAPOON FOR PRESIDENT", OR THE YIPPIES RUNNING A *PIG* FOR OFFICE BACK IN '68.

THEN I SAW *OUR* DUCK'S *X-RAYS*--!

NOW I DON'T KNOW *WHAT* TO THINK.

QUITE A *DILEMMA*.

I SUGGEST-- ONE MOMENT, DOCTOR.

YOU MAY HAVE A FAR MORE *SERIOUS* PROBLEM TO COPE WITH--

--IF I'VE CORRECTLY IDENTIFIED THE *SUN SYMBOL* ON THESE YOUNG PERSON'S SHIRTS!

I'M AFRAID I DON'T FOLLOW YOU--!

C'MON GANG--LET'S *CLEAN UP* THIS PARKING LOT!!

LET'S ALL PITCH IN AND SCRUB AND SURPRISE THE *MASTER* WITH OUR GOOD WORKS!!

IF YOU *QUESTION* THEM, DOCTOR, I BELIEVE YOU'LL FIND THEM TO BE "*YUCCIES*"--DISCIPLES OF THE *REVERAND JOON MOON YUC*-- A RATHER CONTROVERSIAL EVANGELIST--

--WHO'S BEEN ACCUSED OF *BRAINWASHING* HIS YOUTHFUL FOLLOWERS AND USING THEM TO HIS OWN, OFTEN *LUCRATIVE* ENDS.

AW, C'MON-- DO WE LOOK BRAINWASHED TO *YOU*??

WE'RE JUST *HIGH* ON LIFE, THE LORD, AND THE *MASTER*!

THEN YOU *ARE* MEMBERS OF THIS GROUP. BUT-- WHAT ARE YOU DOING *HERE*?

HOW DID YOU GET PAST THE *GUARD* AT THE GATE? WE HAVE A POLICY OF "NO ADMITTANCE" UNLESS--

OH, IT'S OKAY! WE CAME WITH THE MASTER!

OH, BUT OF *COURSE*-- THAT EXPLAINS EVERY-THING! THEY CAME WITH THE MASTER!

I'M QUITE AS CONFUSED AS *YOU* ARE, DOCTOR.

WHAT BUSINESS WOULD THE YUCCIES HAVE H--

WINDA!

BLAST! THIS MUST BE *REICH'S* IDEA! NATURALLY, HE'D NEVER TRUST *ME*--!

DOCTOR-- *CALM* YOUR-SELF! I NEGLECTED TO MENTION THAT REV. YUC IS-- *DEAD*!

A HOUSE EXPLODED IN PENNSYLVANIA-- HE WAS TRAPPED *INSIDE*--!*

SURELY HIS FOLLOWERS ARE SUFFERING SOME *MASS-DELUSION*, BORN OF GRIEF!

*AS SEEN IN *HTD* #5--STEVE.

HOWEVER, BACK IN THE VINYL-UPHOLSTERED CELL...

I DON'T CARE WHAT AVERY SAID! DR. REICH WISHES TO CONDUCT HIS OWN TESTS!

NO! NO!! OH, HELP ME!! SOMEBODY!!

IT'S OKAY, BARBARA. YA WON'T GET NO TROUBLE FROM THIS BIRD.

THUNK

RIGHT, HOWARD?

NOW YOU STAY HERE AND BEHAVE YOURSELF --OR YOU COULD GET HURT!

YOU 'N' ME WERE SUPPOSED TO BE FRIENDS, CECIL.

PALS! CHUMS! WAR BUDDIES IN THE BATTLE AGAINST MENTAL ILLNESS!

WHAP

AN' YOU SOLD ME OUT!!

RIGHT DOWN THE RIVER-- IN EXCHANGE FOR ONE FRIGID SMILE FROM ≥SIGH< BARBARA!

≥tsk tsk< HOWARD, YOU COULDN'T PUNCH OUT AN ANGEL FOOD CAKE!

DIDN'T EVEN FEEL IT, HUH...?

WHUMP

UH-UH.

THWIP

BUT I DON'T LIKE WHAT YOU SAID!

I'M NOT NO PUPPET THAT DANCES WHEN BARBARA PULLS THE STRINGS!

WHO DO YA THINK SHE IS?

I'M NOT AFRAID O' HER--

"--JUST THE DIRECTOR!"

...UND YOU LANDED IN A TREETOP IN DELAWARE?

AMAZING.

UND VER-R-RY FORTUNATE! I FEEL OUR COLLABORATION VILL BE A LONG UND FRUITFUL ONE--

--REVEREND YUC!!

PERHAPS SO. WE SEEM TO SHARE A COMMON VISION, DR. REICH.

BEGGING THE DIRECTOR'S PARDON... WE ARE READY FOR THE RITUAL.

SANK YOU, BARBARA-- UND JAH, YOU LOOK MUCH BETTER IN BLACK LEATHER!

I VOULD SUGGEST YOU TAKE IN DER COAT AT DER WAIST, HOWEVER.

YES, HERR DOCTOR.

I GO NOW--TO THE DUNGEON!

FOR THE GREATER GLORY OF THE ALMIGHTY!

NEIN, HERR REVEREND --TO DEMONSTRATE A TECHNIQUE.

A GREAT DEAL IS RIDING ON DER OUT-COME OF ZIS RITUAL ...FOR US BOTH!

DO NOT ALLOW DER ALMIGHTY TO DISTRACT YOU FROM DER PUR-POSE, eh?

GOOD HEAVENS!! HOWARD--WHAT'S HAPPENED?! WHERE'S WINDA?

I... DUNNO...

"BARBARA... SAID SOMETHIN'... ABOUT... THE SUB-CELLAR!... MAYBE THEY RAN OUTTA COAL... FIGGERED THEY'D BURN 'ER... FOR FUEL...!"

AS YOU CAN SEE, REVEREND, POOR, POOR WINDA IS DEFINITELY POSSESSED.

OH, YES, UNQUESTIONABLY.

AND YOU MUST UNDERSTAND, WINDA, THAT THE DEMON MAY ONLY BE DRIVEN FROM YOU THROUGH THE DIVINE APPLICATION OF... SENSATION.

THE DEMON WILL FLEE, YOU SEE--FROM PAIN INFLICTED BY BEAUTY.

YOU MUST LOVE THE LORD AND ALL HIS WORKS AND ME, HIS AGENT-- 'TIL IT HURTS.

FOR BESIDE THIS EXQUISITE ANGUISH, THE DEMON'S POWER PALES.

BEHOLD-- THE HUMBLE PETUNIA!

FIXATE ON ITS BEAUTY, CHILD--FEEL ITS MEMORY OF THE TORMENT AS IT STRAINED TO PIERCE THE SURFACE OF THE EARTH TO MEET THE SUNLIGHT--AS IT WAS LATER TORN FROM THAT EARTH TO SERVE YOU!

IT MUST MAKE YOU CRY, WINDA--AND ADORE IT--AND ADORE ME--AND BELIEVE IN ME WITHOUT QUESTION!

WHAP

=ouch=

BELIEVE ME, WINDA --CRY AND BELIEVE ME!!

SUDDENLY--

WHAT IN THE NAME OF SANITY--?!

MY APOLOGIES, DOCTOR-- IT IS REVEREND YUC-- ALL TOO ALIVE!

HELLST-- DAIMON HELLSTROM?!

AVERY--AND HELLSTROM!!

REMOVE THEM!! NO ONE MAY INTRUDE ON THIS RITUAL!

WITH PLEASURE, REVEREND! I'VE LONG AWAITED A SATISFYING MATCH WITH THIS FOOL!

YAAARGH

BARBARA-- ARE YOU MAD?!

BUT BEFORE THE BEHEMOTH NAMED CECIL CAN REACH DAIMON...

...THE YOUNG EXORCIST LIFTS HIS HANDS IN THE SIGN OF THE TRIDENT!

INSTANTLY, THE SOULFIRE BLAZES FORTH, AS IF FROM WITHIN HIS PORES, SHEATHING DAIMON IN A COLUMN OF SULFUROUS FLAME!

IT SEEMS, ON SIGHT, TO BE CONSUMING HIM ALIVE! BUT IN TRUTH...

...IT IS THE FIRST STAGE IN A TOTAL AND TERRIFYING TRANSFORMATION!

IT'S AT THIS CRUCIAL MOMENT...

WINDA...?

HAH...?

WHOOPS

...THAT A CONCERNED, BUT STILL GROGGY FOWL CHOOSES TO STUMBLE BACK ONTO THE SCENE.

DID YOU PRESUME, HELLSTROM, THAT I WOULD NOT BE *AWARE* OF YOUR PECULIAR TALENTS...

...OR, FOR THAT MATTER, THE *RUMORS* CONCERNING YOUR *LINEAGE*?

I'VE BEEN PREPARED TO *CONFRONT* YOU NOW FOR SOME TIME...

...PREPARED TO UNLEASH THE FURY OF THE *WHITE WIND*...TO STRIP THE TEMPTER'S FLAME FROM YOUR VERY *FLESH*...!

YOU SEE, *I'VE* DABBLED IN DEMONOLOGY, *ALSO!*

NO!!

WHOOSH!

BY THE *HADEAN CHIMES!*

THE TRANS-FORMATION HAS BEEN *ARRESTED!*

YET, I FEEL AN ODD *BUOYANCY* AS THOUGH SOME TERRIBLE *BURDEN* HAS BEEN LIFTED FROM--

IT *HAS*, DAIMON--FOR YOUR *SECOND SOUL*, YOUR *DEMONIC SELF*--

--HAS FOUND A NEW *HOME!!*

NEXT

The RETURN OF BEVERLY--The RETURN TO CLEVELAND--and A FEW NEW TURNS of FATE'S CRUEL SCREW IN--

A DUCK POSSESSED!

HOWARD THE DUCK™

30¢ CC

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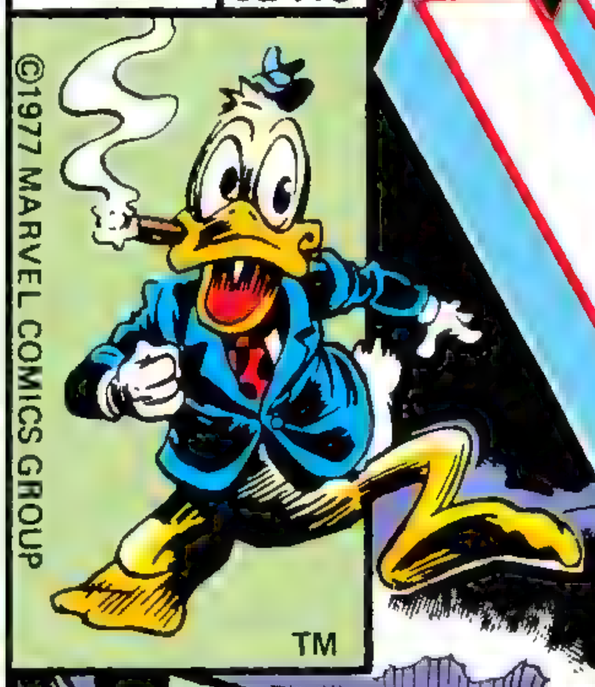

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TRAPPED IN A WORLD HE NEVER MADE!

HOWARD THE DUCK™

WITHIN MAN AND FOWL LURKS A DEMON DEMANDING TO BE SET FREE!

A DUCK POSSESSED!

From the time of his hatching, he was...different. A potentially brilliant scholar who dreaded the structured environment of school, he educated himself in the streets, taking whatever work was available, formulating his philosophy of self from what he learned of the world about him. And then the Cosmic Axis shifted...and that world *changed.* Suddenly, he was stranded in a universe he could not fathom. Without warning, he became a strange fowl in an even stranger land.

Stan Lee PRESENTS: HOWARD THE DUCK!™

STEVE GERBER WRITER/EDITOR * GENE COLAN PENCILLER * KLAUS JANSON INKER * JIM NOVAK LETTERER * IRENE VARTANOFF COLORIST

IT'S TWO! TWO! TWO DUCKS IN ONE!
DAIMON HELLSTROM'S SECOND SELF--THE IMPLACABLY SAVAGE SON OF SATAN--HAS BEEN TRANSPLANTED FROM THE YOUNG EXORCIST'S BODY INTO HOWARD'S!
AND HOWEVER LUDICROUS THE SITUATION MAY APPEAR, ITS POTENTIAL FOR DISASTER IS MONUMENTAL! FOR DESPITE THE FOWL'S DIMINUTIVE STATURE, HE NOW EMBODIES ALL THE SEETHING POWER, ALL THE VIRULENT RAGE, ALL THE CALLOUS DISDAIN OF MORALITY AND HUMANKINDNESS--OF THE TRUE SCION OF HELL!
HE IS, IN SHORT--
A DUCK Possessed!

THE SUBCELLAR OF SAUERBRATEN COUNTY, OHIO'S, MENTAL FACILITY:

WAAUGH

ZZZZZZZZ

BY THE SEVEN CIRCLES! EVEN THE *SOULFIRE* IS AT HIS COMMAND!

ALL THE ABILITIES OF YOUR FATHER'S SON ARE *MINE* NOW, HELLSTROM-- FOR NOW *I* BEAR ON *MY* CHEST THE INVERTED PENTACLE-- THE MARK OF *BAPHOMET!*

SNAP!

GWACIOUS!

YOU'VE *TRIUMPHED*, DAIMON-- YOU'RE FREE AT LAST OF YOUR SATANIC *HERITAGE*--!

H-HOWARD--YOU'RE FWYING TOWARD THE *CEIWING*--!

AYE, DAIMON--YOU'RE FREE AT LAST--!

NOW ONLY THE **WORLD** NEED TREMBLE!!

:OOOO: I'M GOING TO BE TEWWIBWY, TEWWIBWY ILL--!

THE YOUNG WOMAN'S NAME IS **WINDA WESTER**, AND UNTIL THIS MOMENT, SHE, LIKE HOWARD, HAD BEEN AN UNWILLING *INMATE* OF THE ASYLUM... SERVING A 90-DAY TERM AS THE RESULT OF A **TRAFFIC VIOLATION.***

IRONICALLY, IT WAS **SHE** WHO'D BELIEVED HERSELF POSSESSED --AND ON **HER** BEHALF THAT DR. MORTON AVERY **SUMMONED** DAIMON HELLSTROM TO OHIO.

*SEE HTD #12.--STEVE.

HOWARD-- PWEASE-- I'M AFWAID OF HEIGHTS!

SILENCE, FEMALE!

OF COURSE, BOTH AVERY AND HELLSTROM RECKONED WITHOUT THE INTERFERENCE OF REVEREND JOON MOON YLIC AND THE HOSPITAL'S MYSTERIOUS DIRECTOR IN TREATING WINDA'S CASE.

DAIMON DIAGNOSED WINDA AS NORMAL. THE DIRECTOR DISAGREED. AND THAT, AS THEY SAY IN MED CIRCLES, IS WHEN COMPLICATIONS SET IN.

HOWARD, PWETTY PWEASE-- POINT US DOWN-- I'M FWIGHTENED--!

POINT IT DO- :OWWW: IT'S HOT!!

NATURALLY, IT'S HOT! THE SCATHING FIRES OF HELL ITSELF COURSE THROUGH THE TRIDENT'S NETHER-METAL STEM!

M-MY HANDS-- I THINK I BURNED THEM--!

KLONK

BUT I'M SO GWATEFUL TO BE OUT OF THAT HOWWIBLE PWACE-- I DON'T EVEN CARE--!

THANK YOU, HOWARD--

OH, THANK YOU, THANK YOU--

TH-- :OOOH:

SLAP!

STOW IT, SISTER!

:SNIFL< B-BUT, HOWARD--WHAT DID I DO?--WHY DID YOU WAWWOP ME--?!

BECAUSE, YOU INSIPID SNIVELLING FOOL--

YOUR TAMPERING WITH THE TRIDENT IN MID-AIR JEOPARDIZED BOTH OUR LIVES--AND COULD HAVE ABORTED OUR ESCAPE!

HOWARD--WAIT--DON'T FWY OFF IN A SNIT--!

DON'T WEAVE ME ALL AWONE--!

"I CANNOT AFFORD TO BE SADDLED WITH THE LIKES OF YOU, WINDA," THE DEMONIC DUCK SHOUTS BACK. "I'VE CARRIED YOU THIS FAR--

"--THE REST IS UP TO YOU!"

MEANWHILE, BACK IN THE BASEMENT--

YOU HAD NO RIGHT TO INTRUDE, DR. AVERY! YUCI'S RITUAL WAS SPECIFICALLY ORDERED BY THE DIRECTOR!

REICH AUTHORIZED YOU TO SUSPEND THE GIRL BY HER WRISTS FROM THE PIPES--?!

--TO CONFUSE AND TERRIFY HER WITH TALK OF DEMONS AND TORTURE?! AND YOU COMPLIED??

MY GOD--I'LL SEE YOU BOTH UP ON CHARGES FOR THIS--!

WOULD THAT I, LIKE YOURSELF, COULD NOT ANTICIPATE THE CONSEQUENCES--

WOULD THAT I COULD REMAIN TO WITNESS IT, DR. AVERY.

--OF MY SATANIC SOUL'S LUST FOR DESTRUCTION UNLEASHED IN THE BODY OF A CREATURE RECENTLY UNABLE TO CONTROL EVEN HIS OWN MIND!*

IN TIME, THE FOWL'S GENUINE PERSONALITY CANNOT HELP BUT SUCCUMB TO ITS SEVERE MENTAL FATIGUE.

*HOWARD SUFFERED A NEAR-NERVOUS BREAKDOWN IN ISH #11.-S.

AND WHEN IT *DOES*-- WHEN ITS INFLUENCE UPON THE DUCK'S BEHAVIOR IS NEGATED *COMPLETELY*--

--ONLY *I* SHALL STAND 'TWIXT THIS HAPLESS WORLD AND THE *WRATH* OF THE DEVIL'S FIRSTBORN!

THIS TIME YOU AND REICH HAVE GONE *TOO FAR*, BARBARA!

FIRST, I'M GOING TO HAVE IT OUT WITH *HIM*, FACE-TO-FACE! IT'S ABOUT *TIME* I WAS ALLOWED TO *MEET* HIM--!

AND THEN, NO DOUBT, YOU'LL NOTIFY THE *STATE MENTAL HEALTH* COMMISSION, WON'T YOU?

=SIGH= VERY WELL, DOCTOR--DO AS YOU *WILL*!

CLEVELAND!

YOU'LL PAY IN *SPADES* FOR YOUR AUDACITY-- WHEN THE *PLAN* BECOMES THE *LAW*!

AS THE DEVIL-DUCK DESCENDS UPON THE DECAYING CITY, *VENGEANCE* FILLS HIS HEART, AND *RAGE*--OR PERHAPS SMOG-- TINGES HIS EYES WITH *CRIMSON*!

THERE'S ANOTHER HUMAN HERE TO WHOM HE OWES A DEBT OF ANGER...

...A DEBT HE FULLY INTENDS TO HONOR.

EMPLOYING THE PSYCHO-SENSITIVE PROPERTY OF THE TRIDENT, HE ATTUNES HIMSELF TO HER INDIVIDUAL PSYCHIC WAVELENGTH...

...AND PINPOINTS THE SOURCE OF TRANSMISSION.

AND THEN, HE GRINS... NOT WITH AMUSEMENT, BUT WITH THE PERVERSE DELIGHT...

...OF A GONIF WHO'S JUST SPIED AN EASY MARK!

HER NAME IS BEVERLY SWITZLER.

AND FOR SOME TIME SHE'D BEEN HOWARD'S CLOSEST COMPANION, UNTIL...

THAT NIGHT IN THE MOTEL -- I CAN'T GET IT OFF MY MIND, PAUL!

I'VE GONE OVER IT AGAIN AND AGAIN... AND I STILL CAN'T IMAGINE WHY HOWARD DESERTED ME!*

HE'D COLLAPSED WITH EXHAUSTION... I WENT OUT WITH THE DOCTOR TO DISCUSS HIS CONDITION...

*HTD #11. -- S.

...AND WHEN I GOT BACK, HE WAS GONE!!

I KNOW, BEV... YOU'VE TOLD ME THE STORY A HUNDR--

UHM... THAT WAS UN-CALLED FOR, WASN'T IT?

LOOK, YOU'VE DONE ALL YOU CAN TO LOCATE HIM...!

AND COMING BACK TO CLEVELAND WAS THE LOGICAL NEXT MOVE! IT'S THE FIRST PLACE HE'D TRY TO FIND YOU...!

YEAH, YEAH... BUT IT'S BEEN OVER A WEEK, PAUL -- AND THERE HASN'T BEEN A PEEP, LET ALONE A QUACK! WHAT IF --?

BUT BEFORE BEV CAN GIVE VOICE TO HER FEARFUL SPECULATION...

HOLY LEAPING--! IT'S HIM!!

CRASH

I'VE COME FOR YOU, BEVERLY!

JEEZ--HE ALWAYS *DID* KNOW HOW TO RELIEVE ANY GIVEN *MONOTONY.*

AND NOT A MOMENT TOO *SOON,* DUCKY! IT'S *SO* GOOD TO *SEE* YOU--

--EVEN IF THAT ENTRANCE *IS* GONNA COST ME A *FORTUNE!*

DID YOU CLOSET YOURSELF IN A *PITCHFORK* FACTORY, OR WHAT? BEV'S BEEN WORRIED *SICK!*

OH, SHE *HAS,* HAS SHE? THEN PERHAPS SHE'LL ENLIGHTEN US--

--AS TO WHY SHE *WASN'T* CONCERNED WHEN I WAS DESPERATELY *ILL,* WHY *SOCIALIZING* WITH THE HANDSOME YOUNG *DOCTOR* WAS MORE *IMPORTANT!!*

OWW!!

YES... I KNOW.

LEGGO, YA TURKEY-- THAT *HURTS!*

AND YOUR AGONIES HAVE ONLY *BEGUN*, MY SWEET!

WE'VE MUCH TO *SETTLE*, YOU AND I-- BUT MOSTLY *I*!

AND I'VE AN AVERSION TO *SPECTATORS*!

WAVE "BYE-BYE" TO MR. SAME, DEAR!

JEEZ!

S'LONG, PAUL!

MEANWHILE, ON A LONELY SUB-URBAN ROAD, HEADED TOWARD TOWN...!

...OH, YES, *POSITIVE*! ESPECIAWWY IF HE HAD THE POWER TO *OBWITEWATE* IT FWOM THE MAP!

YES, MMM-HMM, CWEVEWAND IS *UNDOUBTEDWY* WHEWE HE WOULD GO, YES!

THEN, PW-- *PLEASE* BE SILENT, WINDA, AND ATTENTIVE TO ANY SIGN OF--

WOOK! WOOK UP THEWE--AT THWEE O'CWOCK!

YOU SEEM *AGITATED*, MY DEAR. ANYTHING *AMISS*?

SHUCKS, N-*NO*! I MEAN-- HOW MANY GIRLS EVER GET THE THRILL OF *DANGLING* OVER CLEVELAND--

--BY THE NAPE OF THEIR HONEYBEE *BLOUSE*?!

VRROOM

THAT'S MOWE THAN A *SIGN*, MR. HEWWSTWOM-- IT'S PWACTICAWWY *SKY-WITING*!

STEP ON IT!

AND AS WE WACE TO THE *WESCUE*, WET ME WEPEAT HOW VEWY KIND IT WAS OF YOU TO OFFER ME A WIFT TO TOWN.

IF YOU *HADN'T* COME AWONG, I MIGHT'VE SAT AND CWIED FOR *DAYS*--!

SUNSPOT SLOPE: CLEVELAND'S POPULAR LOVER'S LANE, WHERE ACCORDING TO LEGEND, SOME YOUNG COUPLE IS STRICKEN WITH TERMINAL HICKEYS ONCE EVERY 11 YEARS.

H-HOWARD... WHY DID YOU BRING ME HERE?

SPEAK NO MORE!

BUT HOW'M I SUPPOSED TO LEARN IF I CAN'T ASK QUESTIONS?

BY LISTENING CLOSELY--TO YOUR ANSWERS.

I SHALL BE THE INQUISITOR!

AND OUR FORUM SHALL BE THIS CIRCLE OF HELLFIRE!

NOW, THEN --FIRST QUESTION:

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT ME, BEVERLY?

ANSWER!

UH--GEE, I DUNNO!

GUESS I NEVER REALLY THOUGHT ABOUT IT MUCH--

OUCH!

D-DUCKY, THAT'S MY WRIST--NOT A DOOR-KNOB--!

ANSWER! HOW DO YOU CONCEIVE OUR RELATIONSHIP?

WHAT DO I MEAN TO YOU?

DO YOU LIKE ME--OR CHERISH ME --OR PERHAPS I MERELY AMUSE YOU?

AM I YOUR OBJECT OF RIDICULE, SWEET?

AM I??

OH, NO, HOWARD --NO!!

THEN WHAT?! TELL ME!! I DEMAND TO --EH?

SCRREEE

IT IS A CALCULATED RISK. THE SOULFIRE CAN INSTANTLY INCINERATE HUMAN FLESH.

BUT METAL IS SOMEWHAT MORE RESISTANT.

BUMP

TOO, THIS IS A SPIRITUAL RATHER THAN A PHYSICAL FLAME. ITS INTENSITY IS DIRECTLY PROPORTIONATE TO THE STRENGTH OF THE DUCK'S WILL.

GWACIOUS! YOU WAMMED WIGHT INTO HIM!!

NO, WINDA... MY FOOT WAS ON THE BRAKE.

THE INTENT WAS TO ADDLE HIS CONCENTRATION, NOT KILL HIM.

BUT I FEAR I'VE ACHIEVED ONLY MEAGER SUCCESS EVEN AT THAT!

ONCE PROVOKED, THE HELLSPAWN IS NOTORIOUSLY SINGLE-MINDED IN HIS PURSUIT OF RETRIBUTION!

BAM

MMM--I SEE WHAT YOU MEAN, YES I DO!

AT LEAST WE MADE POSSIBLE THAT OTHER YOUNG WOMAN'S ESCAPE!

I SUGGEST YOU JOIN HER, WINDA--OUT OF THE LINE OF FIRE!

HENCEFORTH, THE BATTLE MUST BE MINE ALONE!

WHY, HOW NOBLE OF YOU, DAIMON--

--HOW INSIPIDLY NOBLE!

YOU'RE COGNIZANT, THEN, THAT YOU'VE BROUGHT ABOUT PRECISELY WHAT YOU'D HOPED TO AVOID--

--THAT YOUR STUNT-CAR HEROICS HAVE THRUST THE DUCK'S PERSONALITY INTO THE UNCONSCIOUS--

--THAT I AM THE SON OF SATAN!

AYE, HELLSPAWN, I'M AWARE OF ALL THAT--

--AND I FULLY INTEND TO DEVOUR YOUR VERY SOUL??

SSSSSS

--AND MORE!

NO! RELEASE YOUR GRIP ON THE TRIDENT!

I COMMAND YOU!

WHUMP

"NO, DEMON, YOU DO NOT, AND NEVER DID! BUT YOU ARE PART OF ME--MUCH AS I LOATHE THE THOUGHT --AND I MUST RECLAIM YOU--!

"--FOR THE DUCK'S SAKE, FOR THE WORLD'S, AND PERHAPS EVEN MY OWN!"

IT IS *DONE*. THE DEMON OCCUPIES ITS RIGHTFUL HOST ONCE MORE...

-- DRAWN BACK THROUGH THE NETHER-METAL TRIDENT INTO *MYSELF!*

BUT ALAS, THAT SHIMMERING *MIST* DISPERSING IN THE BREEZE...!

UH, EXCUSE ME, BUT... ARE YOU?... IS HE?... OKAY, HUH?

IN A WORD:

NO.

NO. HIS *BODY* FUNCTIONS CONTINUE. BUT UNLESS I CAN *GATHER* THOSE WIND-SCATTERED PARTICLES OF *SPIRIT*...

THE FOWL'S SOUL PROVED TOO *DEBIL-ITATED*...

...TO ENDURE THE RIGORS OF THE DEMON'S VIOLENT *DEPARTURE*.

THAT CURIOUS *MIST*--WAS HOWARD'S DISCARNATE *SELF*.

YOU MEAN-- HE'S *DEAD?!*

...AND *RETURN* THEM TO THE DUCK'S CORPOREAL FORM...

...WELL, I BELIEVE THE COLLOQUIAL-ISM IS STILL "*VEGETABLE*," IS IT NOT?

OH, HOW TWAGIC!!

PERHAPS... BUT IT'S ALSO AN EDUCATION FEW BEINGS HAVE BEEN PRIVILEDGED TO EXPERIENCE.

AS DAIMON SOON DISCOVERS, HOWARD'S PSYCHIC MIST, DISSEMINATED ON THE WIND, HAS SETTLED GENTLY, IMPERCEPTIBLY UPON OTHERS IN THE VICINITY, INSINUATING ITSELF INTO THEIR HEARTS AND MINDS!

SUDDENLY, THE DUCK FINDS HIMSELF LEADING A THOUSAND LIVES AT ONCE--PERCEIVING THE UNIVERSE THROUGH SENSES AND SENSIBILITIES NOT HIS OWN!

AND IT'S PRETTY DISCONCERTING AT FIRST--THIS BEING AT ONE WITH CLEVELAND--THIS INITIAL INABILITY TO DISCERN SYMBOL FROM PHENOMENON.

THE INFLUX OF DATA IS TOO RAPID, TOO MASSIVE--AND HIS PRESENCE IS TOO DIFFUSE TO PERMIT COMMUNICATION.

HE MUST CONTENT HIMSELF TO OBSERVE --AND FEEL--AND BE--WITH THESE ACCIDENTAL SOULMATES.

THE STREET PUNK, WHO SEES A PREDATOR IN EVERY SHADOW --WHO KNOWS THE BIG BAD WORLD EXISTS JUST TO EAT HIM ALIVE--UNLESS HE CHEWS IT UP AND SPITS IT OUT FIRST.

THE ASSEMBLY-LINE WORKER, WHO KNOWS HIS HEAD LONG AGO BECAME A PART OF SOMEBODY'S CAR.

THE HOUSEWIFE, WHOSE GRAVE RESPONSIBILITIES ARE ALL THAT'S KEEPING HER AFLOAT.

THE EX-EXECUTIVE, EJECTED FROM HIS ENCAPSULATED EXISTENCE WITHOUT LIFE-SUPPORT. SORRY. BUDGET CUT!

THE GRANDFATHER WHO KNOWS HE POSSESSES NO WISDOM TO PASS ON TO HIS HEIRS; JUST JOKES. AND THE GRANDSON, WHO KNOWS IT, TOO--BUT THINKS THEY'RE FUNNY.

NOW, UNDER DAIMON'S GUIDANCE, THE MISTS CONGEAL ONCE MORE...

...SWIRLING IN RIBBONS OF COLOR ABOUT THE WATERFOWL'S SOULLESS SHELL...

...DROPPING SOFTLY, SILENTLY, LIKE A BLANKET OF STARS, WARMING THE DUCK WITH THEIR LIFE-LIGHT...!

UNTIL...

...HE WAKES, SO CONSUMED AT FIRST WITH EMOTION THAT HE CANNOT SEE, CANNOT HEAR, CANNOT SPEAK...

...ONLY WEEP!

BEHOLD, HOWARD-- THE SUNRISE!

=SNIF= FIGURES! YOUR TYPICAL CORNBALL CAPPER TO A STORY LIKE THIS...!

WHAT HAPPENED TO ME, HELLSTROM? I SAW-- SOMETHING--!

AHH-- FORGET IT. MUST'A BEEN A WEATHER BALLOON.

EPILOG:

WELL... WHAT'S THE VERDICT? DO HOWARD AND WINDA GO BACK TO THE ASYLUM--?

NO NEED, MS. SWITZLER. DR. AVERY HAS ALREADY SIGNED THE NECESSARY PAPERS FOR THEIR DISCHARGE.

OR DO I GET TO KEEP THEM?

WE'RE GONNA BE BOARDERS, PAUL--NOT SLAVES!

TELL 'EM WE PROMISE TO HOLD WEEKLY GROUP THERAPY SESSIONS!

WEAWWY?! OH, JOY!! WE'RE FWEE!!

THEN IT'S OFFICIAL! WE'RE REUNITED, DUCKY! THE PARTNERSHIP'S BACK ON!

=waaaugh=

AND BACK AT THE HOSPITAL...

HE'S DONE IT, HERR DOKTOR--SIGNED THEIR RELEASES!

IN DIRECT DISOBEDIENCE OF MEIN ORDERS! VERY VELL!

THEN YOU AGREE, HERR DOKTOR?

JAH, YUC! DER TIME HAS COME TO MOBILIZE!

PREPARE TO EVACUATE ZESE PREMISES, BARBARA--

--UND RELOCATE DER OPERATION TO REV. YUC'S PRIVATE UNIVERSITY!

JAWOHL... NOW "DR. REICH" VILL DISAPPEAR MITOUT DER TRACE, TO MAKE ROOM FOR--DER VON --DER ONLY--!!

NEXT: THE HTD ANNUAL #1 WITH "BAD NIGHT IN BAGMOM!"

THEN THE ISLAND OF DR. BONG! IN HTD #15 --ON SALE SOON!

Marvel Bullpen Profile of Steve Gerber, caricature by Marie Severin, from *F.O.O.M.* #5 (Spring/April 1974)

STEVE GERBER

How does a man end up writing dialog for a duck?

Steve Gerber claims that Howard was an accident, that the Man-Thing story he first appeared in demanded such a character, a topper as it were to the insanity that preceded it. We know better. We know that Steve Gerber is not accident-prone.

He *is* mad. Totally.

He *is* paranoic. He won't go into a trance unless he's sure nobody's waiting for him there.

And he *is*, undoubtedly, one of the more talented writers ever to hit the Marvel Comics scene.

But how did he get that way?

Let's see. He tells us his worst job ever was as a salesman in a used car lot in St. Louis when he was 22. Seems Steve was too honest. He couldn't lie to any prospective customer and he sure couldn't sell those junkers via the truth. So he was fired by the owner of the lot his uncle! (And Steve didn't blame him a bit.) He and his family nearly starved to death in the weeks that followed. They were living on food stamps and had no hope at all. For the next couple weeks, they were in a state of passive panic. Passive because they had to conserve their energy. Finally, Steve got a job on a radio station.

Eventually, he got trapped in an ad agency, suffocating as he did commercials for a savings and loan company until, one particularly bad day, he wrote Roy Thomas, a friend of some ten years, and said, "I am an old friend and you must help me. I am dying." Six months later Steve was at Marvel.

There you have it—a typical American success story.

Steve now has 1 wife (Margo, whom he met while teaching Communication—"which I have since forgotten how to do"—at St. Louis U.) 1 daughter (3-year-old Samantha), 2 dogs (Apple and Willy), and 3 cats (Stupid, Stricken, and Kitten). He's currently interested in writing films and has made several films on his own.

The above paragraph sounds like something from *Sixteen.*

And it still doesn't, nor do any of the previous paragraphs, explain how Steve Gerber ended up as:

— a gag-writer for a duck,
— one of America's most prolific writers of morality plays (with a walking pile of muck as the star, for cryin' out loud),
— and one of the wildest humorists we've ever seen.

Except that we don't ask for explanations.

It's enough that he, like the changing of the seasons, is always there at the right time.

(Okay, Steve. We practically deified you. Now will you let Tony's mother go?—

(We told you he was mad.)

Underneath the lettering paste-up on Frank Brunner's *Giant-Size Man-Thing* #4 cover original art, a previously unseen illustration of Howard is revealed!

Courtesy Jim Blanchard

Giant-Size Man-Thing #4, "Frog Death!" page 1 pencil preliminary drawing
by Frank Brunner

Courtesy HeritageAuctions.com

Giant-Size Man-Thing #4, "Frog Death!" page 1 original art by Frank Brunner

Book GIANT-SIZE MAN-THING
4
pg = 52
I'LL KILL YA! I'LL BREAK EVERY WART ON YOUR BODY!
ribit
INDEED, HE IS SO POSSESSED WITH THAT THOUGHT, THAT HE NEVER REALIZES THE MENACE IS ENDED.
OW-W-W! HEY! WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE--?
JOE! MIKE! IT'S HIM! THE MANIAC THE KIDS CALLED ABOUT!
HUH--?!
WHAT'RE YA DOIN'? YA GOT THE WRONG GUY, I TELL YA! IT'S A FROG YOU'RE AFTER!
A FROG. SURE, BUDDY. WE'LL TALK ABOUT IT AT THE STATION--
--AFTER WE GET YOU OUTTA THAT DUCK SUIT!
DUCK SUIT?? ARE YOU CRAZY? THIS IS MY BODY! I'M REAL, I TELL YA!
POL
SURE, SURE. WE KNOW. WE'RE JUST TAKING YOU IN FOR YOUR PROTECTION.
WE'LL COME BACK FOR THE FROG.
waaagh
POLICE
ribi
THE END
BRUNNER 74
SPLAT
DON'T BE INHUMAN... START FOOMIN'!
52

Courtesy Steve Donnelly

Howard the Duck #1, page 1 pencil preliminary drawing
by Frank Brunner

Courtesy HeritageAuctions.com

Howard the Duck #1, page 1 original art
by Frank Brunner & Steve Leialoha

HOWARD THE DUCK 1, JAN '76 SEPT SCHED - 1

Stan Lee PRESENTS: HOWARD THE DUCK!™

CREATED & WRITTEN BY STEVE GERBER • ILLUSTRATED & COLORED BY FRANK BRUNNER
CO-PLOTTERS
INKED BY STEVE LEIALOHA
JOHN COSTANZA, letterer
MARV WOLFMAN, editor

BEHOLD: A DEPRESSED DUCK.

NOW HOMELESS, PENNILESS, HE STANDS ON THE BANK OF THE CUYAHOGA RIVER, CONTEMPLATING...

TWICE HE HAS SAVED THE CITY OF CLEVELAND--FIRST FROM THE WARTY MENACE OF THE MAN-FROG, THEN FROM THE FANGS OF THE HORRIBLE HELLCOW.

AND WHAT THANKS DID HE GET? JAIL THE FIRST TIME. BENIGN NEGLECT, THE SECOND.

--SUICIDE? YEAH. WELL. MAYBE.

HOWARD THE BARBARIAN

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Courtesy HeritageAuctions.com

Howard the Duck #1, page 9 original art
by Frank Brunner & Steve Leialoha

HOWARD THE DUCK
15
LOOK--THAT'S THE CITADEL OF SAI-FUUR, JUST AS PRO-RATA DESCRIBED IT TO ME. THE JEWEL-KEY'S IN THERE.
C'MON... LET'S GET IT AND SPLIT THIS SCENE.
WHY DON'T WE NOT GET IT AND SPLIT ANYWAY?
BY THE RED COLUMN!
'CAUSE PRO-RATA'S WATCHING US, DUCKY!
A DAMSEL-- PURSUED BY A NEWLY-HATCHED BAHNDBIRD!
MUST SLAY IT-- BEFORE IT MATURES!
EYES CLOSED AND A PRAYER ON HIS BEAK...
AND THE WARRIOR, HIS LANCE SHATTERED..
WHY AM I SURE HE'S TALKING ABOUT ME?
CRACK!
...HOWARD STRIKES!!
...PITCHES HEADLONG OFF HIS STRANGE STEED ONTO THE HARD GROUND...
15

Courtesy Steve Donnelly

Howard the Duck #1, page 19 original art
by Frank Brunner & Steve Leialoha

HANDS GIFTED WITH THE PROPORTIONATE STRENGTH OF A SPIDER HAUL THE HARRIED HOWARD TO SAFETY.

AND SO COMES TO PASS PERHAPS THE WEIRDEST MOMENT IN THIS, THE MARVEL AGE OF COMICS, AS...

WEB-FOOT MEETS WEB-HEAD!!

YOU'RE FOR REAL! JAMESON DIDN'T CRACK HIS NUT! YOU'RE A TALKING DUCK!!

YOU'RE NOT EXACTLY MR. NORMAL, EITHER, Y'KNOW.

AND WHILE YOU WERE SPOUTIN' OFF, TELLIN' ME WHAT I ALREADY KNOW--

--PRO-RATA'S PARAKEET FLEW THE COOP!

LOOK--YOU KEEP THE JEWEL-KEY. I'LL SEE ABOUT TRACKING DOWN BIG BIRD.

GOTTA GO NOW. HERE COMES MY CONVENIENT HELICOPTER.

YEAH. SEE YA. BE SURE AN' WRITE.

WELL, HOWARD... THE DANGER'S PAST. AND WE'RE BOTH ALIVE AND WELL.

WHAT WILL YOU DO NOW? WHERE WILL YOU GO?

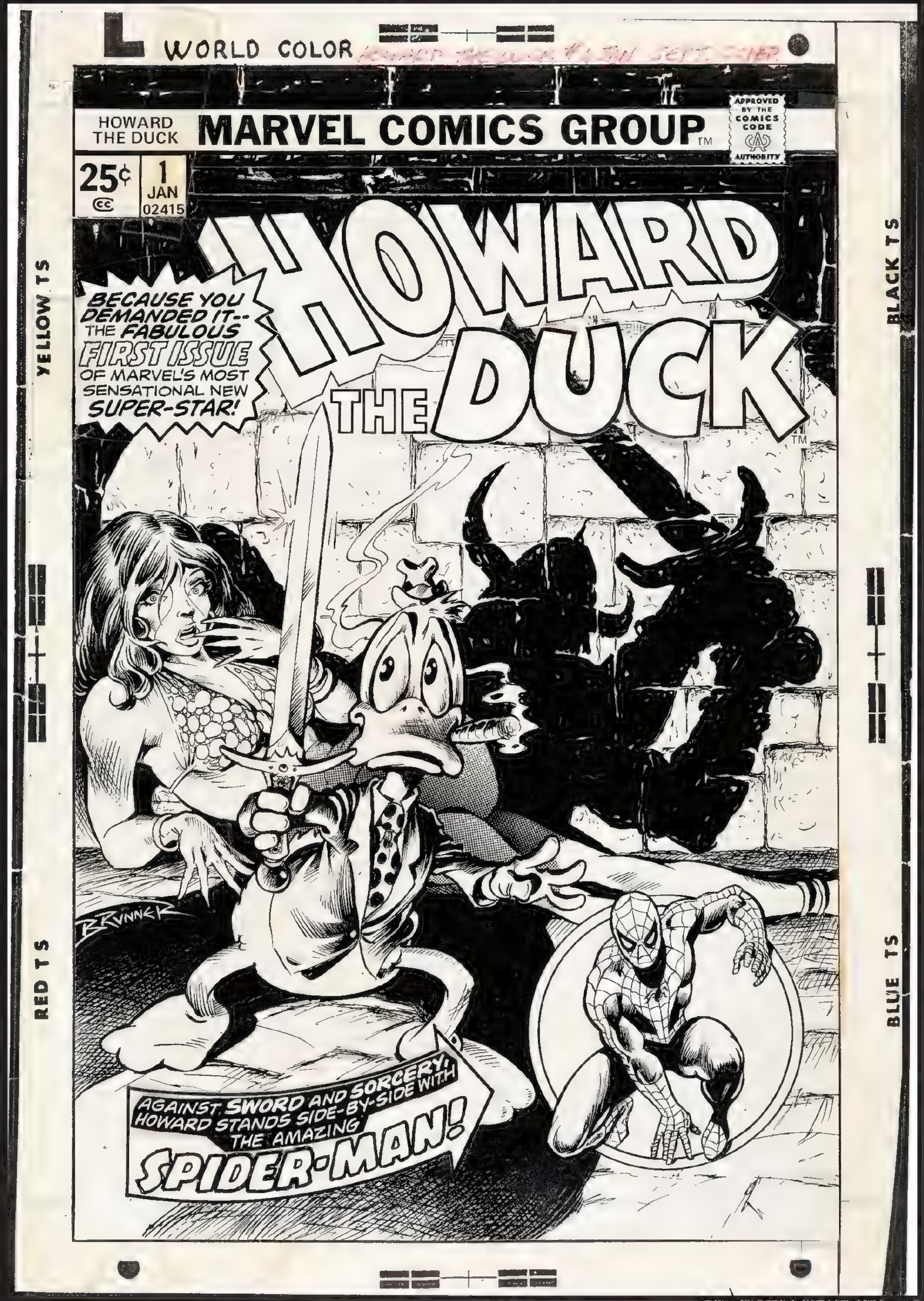
I DUNNO... BUT I SURE COULD USE A GOOD CIGAR.

NEXT: THE STAR-SPAWNED THREAT OF THE DEADLY SPACE TURNIP! BE HERE!

FRANK BRUNNER

Courtesy HeritageAuctions.com

Howard the Duck #1 cover art
by Frank Brunner

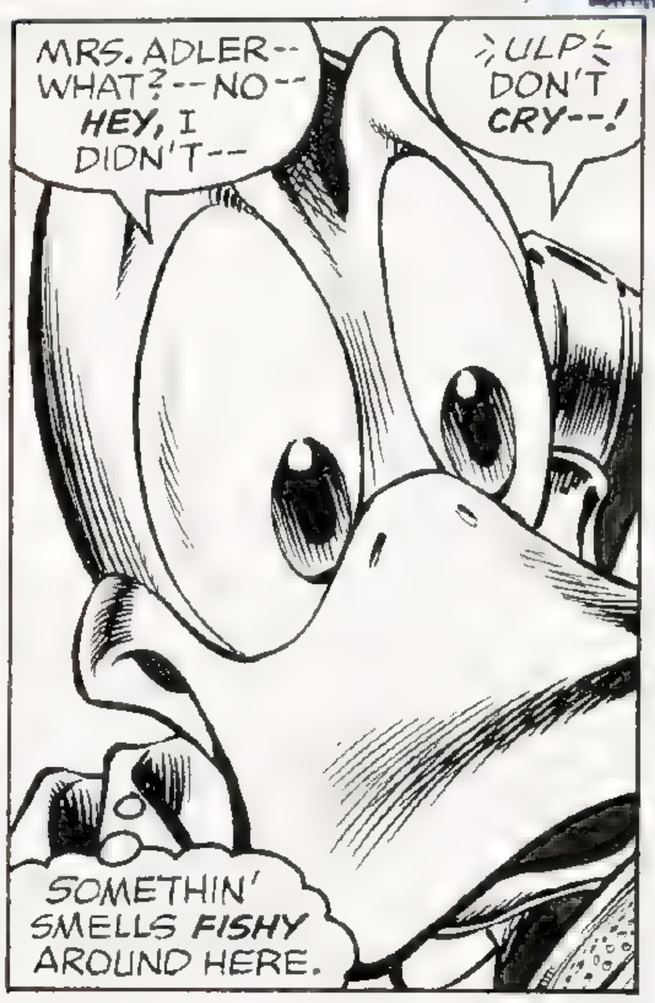


Courtesy HeritageAuctions.com

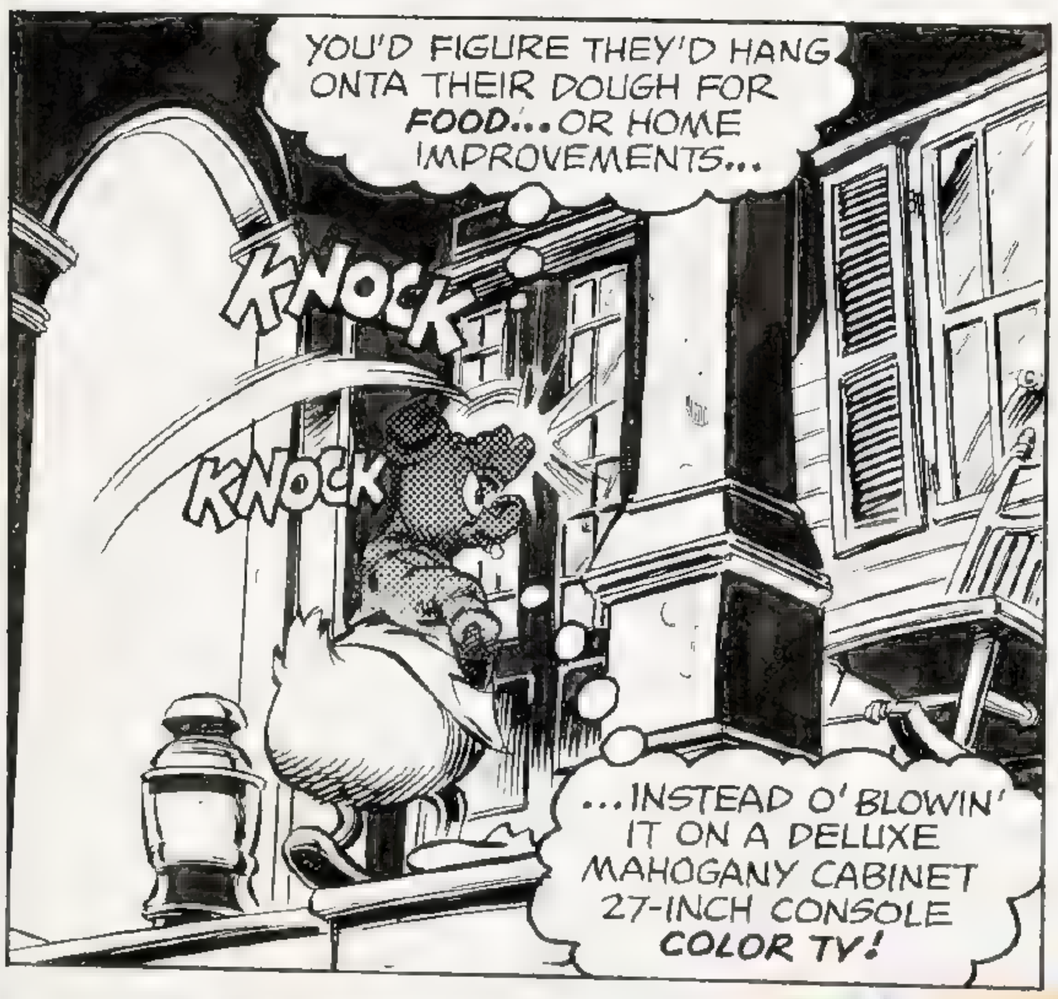
Howard the Duck #5, page 10 original art
by Gene Colan & Steve Leialoha

Gene Colan (ART) 10 16

OKAY, SO THE BOSS LEANS A LITTLE TO THE SLIMEY SIDE--YOUR BASIC SELF-MADE RETAILER.
BOO BOO BEE
SO WHAT? IT'S A JOB... AND IT LOOKS TO BE A CINCH.



SHORTLY...
NOT EXACTLY ANYBODY'S IDEA OF XANADU, IS IT? HOPE I GOT THE RIGHT ADDRESS.
SOMEHOW, I CAN'T PICTURE THE FOLKS WHO LIVE IN THIS DUMP AS SLAVES TO CONSPICUOUS CONSUMPTION.


YOU'D FIGURE THEY'D HANG ONTA THEIR DOUGH FOR FOOD... OR HOME IMPROVEMENTS...
KNOCK
KNOCK
...INSTEAD O' BLOWIN' IT ON A DELUXE MAHOGANY CABINET 27-INCH CONSOLE COLOR TV!

Courtesy HeritageAuctions.com

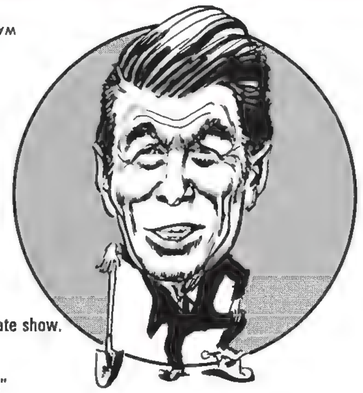
Crazy Magazine #19, released June 1, 1976, stacked up America's cast of presidential hopefuls against the people's candidate, one Howard the Duck.

CRAZY AT 1976 PRESIDENTIAL HOPEFULS

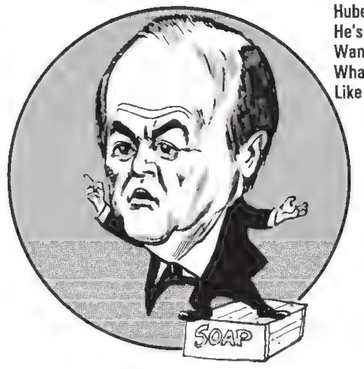
Writer: Fred Wolfe

Teddy Kennedy, one of the speakers,
Claims that he's not among office-seekers.
By all things 'neath the sun
Swears that he'll never run.
Yet he wears a tuxedo with sneakers!

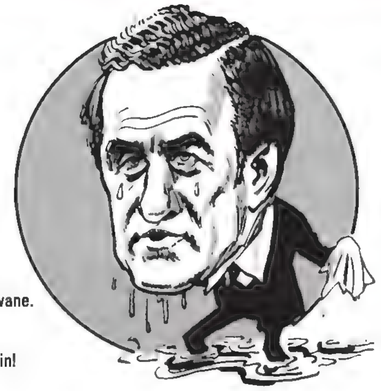
SUDDEN THOUGHT ON THE ACUPUNCTURE CRAZE:
WAS IT PENICILLIN THAT CURED US OR JUST THE NEEDLE?



Ronald Reagan he puts on a great show.
Slapping backs, shaking hands, let's no hate show.
He's brave through thick and thin.
In the end, he does win.
I just saw it last night on "The Late Show!"



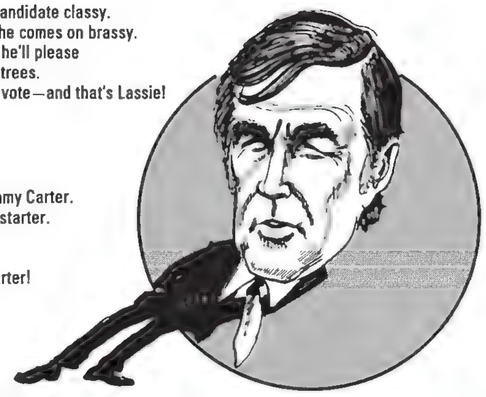
Hubert Humphrey is in a bad panic.
He's so nervous that he's nearly manic.
Wants the President's manse.
What's the odds on that chance?
Like the captain who ran the "Titanic!"



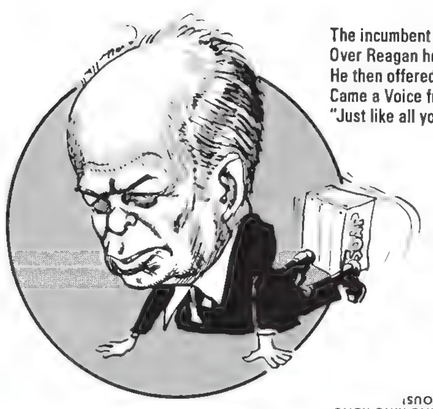
Edmund Muskie is still up in Maine
Gath'ring dust as his chances doth wane.
Queered the top-spot for years
When he burst into tears.
Muskie suffered—but we got the pain!

George Wallace, top man in his state,
Says that he'd make a great candidate.
In all kinds of foul weather
Loves when crowds get together.
Get together—but not integrate!

From down South came this chap Jimmy Carter.
In New Hampshire, looked like a top-starter.
But in Boston's big race
He fell flat on his face.
Go home and pick cotton—much smarter!

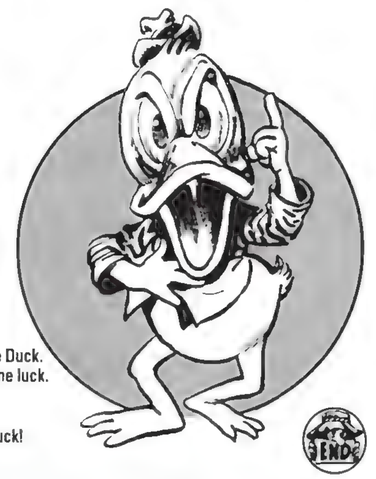


Morris Udall—a candidate classy.
For Environment, he comes on brassy.
Thinks the voters he'll please
By protecting the trees.
He'll get only one vote—and that's Lassie!



The incumbent Republican Ford
Over Reagan he recently scored.
He then offered his prayers.
Came a Voice from "Upstairs"—
"Just like all your talks, Gerald, I'm bored!"

Pride of Washington—Henry "Scoop" Jackson
Wins with issues like bussin' and taxin',
Feels the Russians are finks,
And the wheat-deal—it stinks.
And that Kissinger's neck needs an axin'!



The best candidate? Howard The Duck.
Marvel's hero could win with some luck.
Tho he isn't a human
It would start things a-zoomin'
If the country were run by this cluck!

ATTENTION WORLD: FAY WRAY WAS USING KING KONG TO MAKE BRUCE CABOT JEALOUS!

Howard's presidential campaign on the All-Night Party ticket launched in the letters page of *Howard the Duck* #4, released April 27, 1976.

SPECIAL BULLPEN NOTE:

Marvel Comics has never before endorsed a candidate for office, but now, in this Bicentennial bummer of a year, at this crossroads in the pathway of our nation and civilization, in this impossible era when tumult and social trauma have given way to the mire of mediocrity and monotony...well, it's time to take a stand.

For this reason, we're backing THE candidate with charisma; THE candidate who has no vested interests, owes no favors, and believes all hairless apes were created equal!

WE'RE DRAFTING HOWARD AS A CANDIDATE IN THE 1976 PRESIDENTIAL RACE!

Want to join this burgeoning grassroots movement—and cop yourself a collector's item even Wendell Willkie would be proud to own?

Well, folks, we have a limited quantity of HTD Official Campaign Buttons hot off the presses and ready to unleash upon the public! Each is illustrated in color with the leering face of America's unlikeliest candidate and bears the campaign slogan: "GET DOWN, AMERICA! VOTE HOWARD THE DUCK IN '76!"

To get yours, simply mail $1.00 (plus 25¢ for postage and handling) for each button direct to HTD's campaign manager: STEVE GERBER, % Mad Genius Associates, Room 806, 850 Seventh Avenue, New York, NY 10019. (And make your checks out to Mr. Gerber, okay?)

No, this is not a gag. It's a more-or-less paid political announcement. Order your button now! Today, Cleveland, tomorrow...!

Regular campaign bulletins updated readers beginning with issue #5, released June 22, 1976.

HTD PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN BULLETIN!

New York, (UDI).—— Though entered in none of the major primaries across the country, the Waddle (ducks don't gallop) Poll shows Howard already several percentage points ahead of President Ford and the entire field of Democratic contenders in a number of key states. The opinion of one Pernell Horowitz, an average Idaho grapefruit grower selected at random from the Boise telephone directory, seems to reflect the mood of the Nation. Mr. Horowitz states, "Shucks, we seen enuff foul play in the White House the past few years. Might as well let a fowl play around with it, an' see what he comes up with, I reckon, woo-woo."

In Washington, a noted radical expressed his approval of the Duck's candidacy, deeming him preferable to the sheep who usually seek the office.

In Honolulu, after meeting in executive session, the usually clandestine Hawaiian Revenge Squad publicly announced its endorsement of Howard. And here in New York, Chinese restaurant entrepreneurs have voted to scratch Mandarin duck from their menues in a gesture of support and respect.

Now, what about you, Mr. John Q. Public, Ms. Average Citizen, you typical American, you?! Isn't it time you joined the crusade for a cleaner, brighter America with no greasy wax build-up? Let's sweep the polls and floors together!

Order your Official HTD For President Button today, by sending $1.00 (plus 25¢ for postage & handling) to Howard's Campaign Manager: STEVE GERBER, c/o Mad Genius Associates, Room 806, 850 Seventh Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10019. (Please make all checks payable to Mr. Gerber. Howard doesn't have a bank account. Sorry: contributions are not tax-deductable.)

GET DOWN, AMERICA!
Vote Howard the Duck in '76!

Howard the Duck #6, released August 24, 1976, stepped up the messaging with an announcement: The people had demanded a monthly dose of *Duck* and the people would receive a monthly dose of *Duck*.

HTD CAMPAIGN BULLETIN!!

NEWS FLASH: To bring you clear, concise coverage of Howard's bid for the presidency, *HOWARD THE DUCK goes monthly as of this issue!* That's right, fowl folk, HTD #7 will be on sale in just thirty days with the first installment of "The Manchurian Duck"—a tale of political intrigue with two desserts.

* * *

NEWS FLASH: There's still time to latch onto your Official HOWARD THE DUCK For President button—but believe us, believers, they're going faster than even we ever expected! To get yours, send $1.00 plus 25¢ for postage and handling for *each button* you want to Howard's Campaign Manager:

STEVE GERBER
c/o Mad Genius Associates
850 Seventh Ave., Rm. 806
New York, NY 10019

For your trouble, you'll receive a genuine brown envelope containing your massive, two-inch-diameter, full-color HTD button and an incredibly sloppy note from Steve on yucchy green paper. (Which reminds us: make your checks and money orders payable to Mr. Gerber.) Give a buck and back the Duck!

* * *

NEWS FLASH: If you've already received your button and wouldn't mind yet another sloppy note in your mailbox, send a *stamped, self-addressed envelope* to the same New York address for news of HTD Campaign Paraphernalia To Come! (And before you ask: no, we *cannot* return your button in the same envelope! The "handling" part of the postage & handling charge makes it worth some political flunkie's while to *stuff* all those envelopes! Clear?)

* * *

GOOSE FLESH: Rumors persist of a Republican/Democratic coalition ticket as a last-ditch measure to halt the Duck's rapid rise to political superstardom. The ticket would offer Gerald Ford as candidate for president, Jimmy Carter as veep, and Ronald Reagan as a new executive branch member, "The Old Ranger."

* * *

Further bulletins as they break—or in thirty days, whichever comes first! Until then, remember...

GET DOWN, AMERICA!
Vote HOWARD THE DUCK in '76!

"Weakly" Campaign Updates continued throughout December 1976 cover-dated titles with Update #1 in comics released September 7, 1976.

HOWARD THE DUCK Weakly Campaign Update #1

———*Waaaugh,* Mr. & Ms. America and all you folks at sea! Welcome to the first of a series of fragile reports, issued four times a month by mighty Marvel, to keep you informed of the latest developments in our wondrous waterfowl's bid for this nation's highest office. Yes, no longer content to be a big duck in a little pond, Howard is seeking the Presidency of these Untied States! And now from the mountains, the prairies, and the oceans white with toxic foam, here's this week's news roundup!

———According to Mike, Gene, Jon, and Don at *Apache Books* (631 S.E. Morrison, Portland, Ore.), one of our first official HTD local campaign headquarters, the Duck's drive for write-in votes is well underway. Howard received three votes in the Oregon Primary, and at least eleven more politically-weary souls have pledged their ballots for the November election if the two major parties can't come up with anything more inspiring than they've shown us so far.

———Back east, here at Marvel, endorsements are pouring into the office every day, mostly through the ventilator shaft. Perhaps the most surprising pledge of support so far came from Fulvio deBruize, maitre d' at the Brillo Coffee Shop. Fulvio intended for his pledge to pour in, but it was actually *sucked* in—by editor Archie Goodwin, who found it with his straw in the vanilla malt he'd ordered with lunch. Arch was rushed to the nearest hospital on Smilin' Stan's personal dogsled. He's reported recovering rapidly and threatening to vote for Carter if this nonsense doesn't stop at once.

———*The Duck on the Issues!* We asked Howard to take a stand on pollution. Here's his reply: "Stand?! Every time I step outside for a trip to the cigar store, I take a *walk* on pollution! New York isn't an asphalt jungle anymore. Today, even the asphalt is fighting for air from beneath a carpet of broken glass and hamburger wrappers. That wouldn't be so bad, except the air really isn't worth fighting for! If I'm elected, every manufacturer of no-deposit/no-return bottles will take a compulsory course in advanced self-mortification and will be required by law to *eat* every one of those jagged shards in every gutter in America. I'll go a little easier on the hamburger magnates, though—they can get off with just *wearing* their oily wrappers as disposable paper suits. That's what I call recycling!"

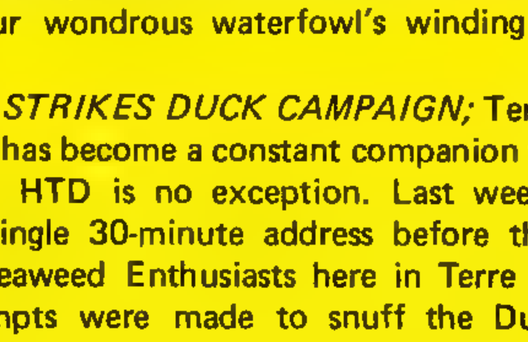
———Isn't it time you threw your support to Howard's new species of leadership? You can show the rest of America you care by wearing (a) an oily paper suit or, preferably, (b) the Official HTD Campaign Button! It's yours for just $1.00, plus 25¢ postage and handling for each button, from Howard's campaign manager: STEVE GERBER, c/o Mad Genius Associates, 850 Seventh Ave., Rm.806, New York, N Y 10019. (Make all checks payable to Mr. Gerber. He plans a long vacation in South America after November.) More in seven days!

"Weakly" Update #2, from titles released September 14, 1976.

HTD WEAKLY CAMPAIGN UPDATE #2:

----Unless you've dwelt in a cave for the past six months and have confined your reading strictly to rare, out-of-print editions of Lin Carter novels, you're probably aware that Marvel's feathered fury, HOWARD THE DUCK, has flung his battered hat into this year's presidential sweepstakes. This lemon-hued rectangle contains the second in our series of feeble reports on our wondrous waterfowl's winding woad to the White House.

----*TRAGEDY STRIKES DUCK CAMPAIGN;* Terre Haute, Ind. (UDI) Danger has become a constant companion to presidential hopefuls, and HTD is no exception. Last week, during the course of a single 30-minute address before the Society of Landlocked Seaweed Enthusiasts here in Terre Haute, *eleven* separate attempts were made to snuff the Duck. Weapons ranged from a letter-bomb skimmed through the air as a paper plane to an exploding cigar with a nuclear triggering device. Ten of these assassination attempts were abortive. The eleventh—involving a bottle of Crazy Glue, a box of Wheat Thins, and an expandable watchband—irreparably scarred one Milos Pitt, a member of the audience. Pitt, already confined to a wheelchair as a result of his participation in the Nixon campaign of '72, found himself directly in the line of fire and unable to dodge. He later commented bitterly, "Sure wish I'd been wearin' one o' them 'Git Down' buttons. Then the watchband would'a bounced right off." Shucks!



----*KRASS KOMMERCIALISM KORNER*: Yes, you can still attach yourself or your clothing to the *Official HTD For President Button* pictured above. The price is $1.00 plus 25¢ postage and handling per button.

----*KRASS KOMMERCIALISM KORNER, Part Two*: If even the button is insufficient to express your fowl ardor, may we recommend our new HTD CAMPAIGN PORTRAIT, produced in association with Magic Mountain Books? Classier than a poster, it's reproduced in subtle sepia on heavy stock, suitable for framing. It, too, is just a buck, plus that inevitable 25¢ for postage and handling. And both the button and portrait are available from Howard's campaign manager:

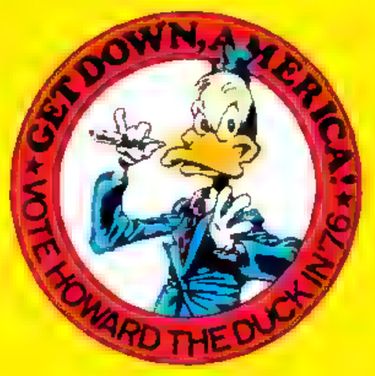
STEVE GERBER
c/o Mad Genius Associates
850 Seventh Avenue, Rm. 806
New York, NY 10019

(Make all checks payable to Steve; he's still saving up for a copy of HTD #1.) Another report in seven days!

"Weakly" Update #3 and Update Final, from titles released September 21, 1976.

HTD WEAKLY CAMPAIGN UPDATE #3

----With the autumnal equinox now upon us, the campaign trail is beginning to feel the impact of the bombastic bird's web-shodden foot. Reports of growing support arrive daily at HOWARD THE DUCK CAMPAIGN HEADQUARTERS. From DeFuniak Springs, Florida, comes word of a touching personal campaign sacrifice. Mr. and Mrs. R. Walter Sandoz, a local retired couple living on a fixed income, have vowed to live on a diet of grubs, tadpoles, and assorted grains and seeds until election day as a show of support for the Duck. "Heck-fire, a body can't afford to eat like a man with today's prices!" claims Mr. Sandoz. "Might as well eat like a duck! After all, if it's good enough for a presidential candidate, I figure it's good enough for us!"



----*CAMPAIGN MEMORABILIA CLASSICS*: Yes, once election day is past, and the Duck makes his way to that little summer house on the Potomac, you can be proud that you purchased the *Official HTD For President Button.* What?! You haven't yet?! Well, then hurry up and send $1.00 plus 25¢ for postage and handling for your button. You'll be showing your support for the fabulous fowl, *and* you'll be leaving a priceless legacy for your children. (No kidding! Do you know how much McGovern/Eagleton buttons are worth?) And if the button doesn't satisfy your ducky determination enough, then send for our new HTD CAMPAIGN PORTRAIT, produced in association with Magic Mountain Books. Eminently suitable for framing, it also retails for just a buck, plus the usual 25¢ for postage and handling. For your button and/or portrait, make your check payable to Howard's campaign manager:

STEVE GERBER
c/o Mad Genius Associates
850 Seventh Avenue, Rm. 806
New York, NY 10019

And, who knows, maybe Steve will send you a picture postcard from Buenos Aires! More in seven days!

HOWARD THE DUCK CAMPAIGN UPDATE FINAL----Time is short, and so is our space. There's just enough room allotted us for this item:

----*DUCK SUPPORT SWEEPS COUNTRY!* Pie Town, New Mexico (UDI) City Father Harley D. Farnsworth last week declared his full support of the Duck. Speaking before a gathering of the West Central New Mexico Chapter of the Sons of the Sagebrush, Mr. Farnsworth said, "It's about time that this country had a candidate that truly respects the public. There's not a man among us that Howard wouldn't look up to. I say let's put him on a pedestal, and look up to him for a change!"

----For further news on the campaign, on the *Official HTD Button* and related paraphernalia, be sure to catch the next HOWARD THE DUCK letters page. And don't forget to vote!

Howard the Duck Presidential Campaign Update: Special Expanded Edition, from *Howard the Duck* #7, released September 28, 1976.

WISE QUACKS

c/o MARVEL COMICS GROUP, 575 MADISON AVE. N.Y.C. 10022

HTD CAMPAIGN UPDATE: SPECIAL EXPANDED EDITION

Greetings, Mr. and Ms. America and all you folks at sea. There's good news tonight. But not much. And mostly it concerns the candidacy of Marvel's feathered fury, HOWARD THE DUCK. Now that you've read the story of how he won the All-Night Party's nomination (which actually happened back in August, but comics unfortunately work on a two-month tape delay), here are the latest-breaking developments in Howard's harrowing political career.

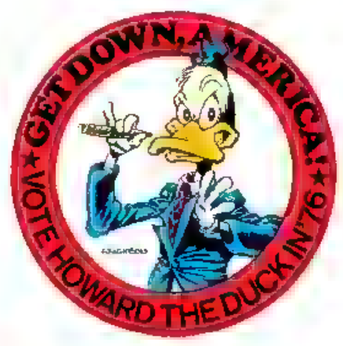
——DUCK BREAKS DEVELOPMENT IN NEW YORK; New York (UDI). In a highly unorthodox demonstration of his antipathy toward shoddy, colorless urban redevelopment, All-Night Party candidate Howard the Duck took a vicious swipe at a new high-rise apartment project on the lower east side. The project collapsed. The swipe was taken with a baseball bat and hit a girder on what was to be the ground floor of the structure. Project designer Nils Harbinger was quoted as commenting, "Aw, shucks on ducks!" The city housing administration is investigating the disaster and, according to one unofficial spokesman, hopes to "find room in our tight budget for a bottle of Crazy Glue to help patch things up." To which Howard rejoined, simply: "Waaaugh. What's the use?"

——DUCK OPPOSES CONSTRUCTION OF NUCLEAR POWER PLANT; Fleasville, Ark. (UDI). "We're true ecologists and humanitarians," said engineer Hubert Dunge of his company's proposed plan for energy expansion coupled with population control. "You're sick," replied candidate Duck. And for days the debate raged here in Fleasville over the building a nuclear reactor adjacent to the playground of Our Lady of Unrelenting Sorrows and Vicissitudes Elementary School. "It's perfectly safe," Dunge repeatedly maintained redundantly over and over again. "Why, I'd sleep like a baby at night even if it were built in my backyard." When HTD and a member of the Fleasville City Council offered to sponsor a rezoning measure that would in fact have allowed the reactor's construction on precisely that site, Dunge reneged. "It's perfectly safe, but the noise, on further consideration, *would* keep me awake at night," he admitted. It was later discovered by private detectives that Dunge was expelled from Our Lady . . . in 1947 for making obscene gestures at his hot lunch. He's craved revenge ever since. Shamefacedly, he acknowledged the truth of the report before a group of outraged parents: "It's true," he said, "but only perfectly safe revenge." The City Council took pity on the long-tortured soul and granted permission for construction of the reactor. To which Howard replied, simply: "Waaaaugh. What's the use?"

——THE DUCK ON THE ISSUES! We asked Howard what he would do, if elected, to solve the problem of unemployment. He replied: "You want the plain, unvarnished truth? The unemployed in this country are just plain lazy — and I *respect* them for it! It takes guts to resist the societal pressure to entrap oneself in a meaningless, boring, socially-unproductive nine-to-five automaton existence. Especially in *this* world, where the first question everybody's conditioned to ask is, 'What do *you* do?' The problem isn't unemployment — it's how to provide you hairless apes with a more convincing rationale for spending half your waking lives battling tedium just to make somebody else rich. Personally, I hope we never succeed in formulating that nifty nugget of persuasion."

——THE DUCK ON THE ISSUES, SHORT TAKES! Fearlessly sticking his beak where other candidates fear to snap, the Duck has made these biting comments. *On the reunion of the Beatles:* "I say fiddle-faddle to the critics who think the four moptops can never live up to their public's expectations. It's an artist's duty to extend his audience's expectations, not merely fulfill them." *On the Middle East:* "I think the U.S. and the Soviet Union should arm both sides with water pistols and let 'em squirt each other to death with oil. As for these hijackings, they've got to stop. Not only are people getting killed, nobody gets to see the end of their in-flight movie anymore." *On Crime in the Streets:* "I'm in favor of licensing muggers, pushers, and all criminals and taxing their profits. Why should the poor middle-class slob be taxed for what's lifted from his pocket?" *On the Ultimate Future of Humanity:* "Waaaaugh. What's the use?"

——CAMPAIGN FUNDING DEPT.: A limited number (roughly equivalent to the annual yield of peanuts in Plains, Ga.) of *Official HTD Campaign Buttons* is still available. Wearing this button will (a) show your support for HTD to the vast majority of Americans who only look at the pictures; (b) get you on half-a-dozen government Enemies Lists; (c) probably improve your love life, but the test results aren't final yet. The button is red, white, blue, and duck-colored, and measures two inches in every direction except thick. You can obtain yours by mailing $1.00, plus 25¢ for postage and handling per button, to the address below.



——CAMPAIGN FUNDING DEPT., *Part Two:* And here's another fine feathered collector's item for you, produced in association with Magic Mountain Books. The *Official HTD Campaign Portrait*, printed in warm, comforting sepia tones on heavy 8" x 10" stock, suitable for framing. No patriot's bedroom wall is complete without one. It, too, is just $1.00, plus the inevitable 25¢ per for postage and handling. And you can get it (and/or the button) by writing to Howard's Campaign Manager:

STEVE GERBER
c/o Mad Genius Associates
850 Seventh Ave., Rm. 806
New York, N Y 10019

(Please make all checks payable to Steve. Otherwise, he'll be unable to afford that ambassadorship to Rhode Island when Howard wins.)

——*NEXT ISSUE:* The Nation jumps aboard the HTD Bandwagon, 'cause it's playing our song. Did you know Benjamin Franklin wanted our national bird to be the turkey? See you in thirty days, indigenous ones!

F.O.O.M. #15 (September 1976) put Howard's bid for president at center stage with a cover by Gene Colan & Steve Leialoha and interviews with the *Howard* team.

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FOOM Phase Six

Editorial by David Anthony Kraft

Question: What do Steranko, Tony Isabella, Scott Edelman, Duffy Vohland, Chris Claremont and myself have in common?

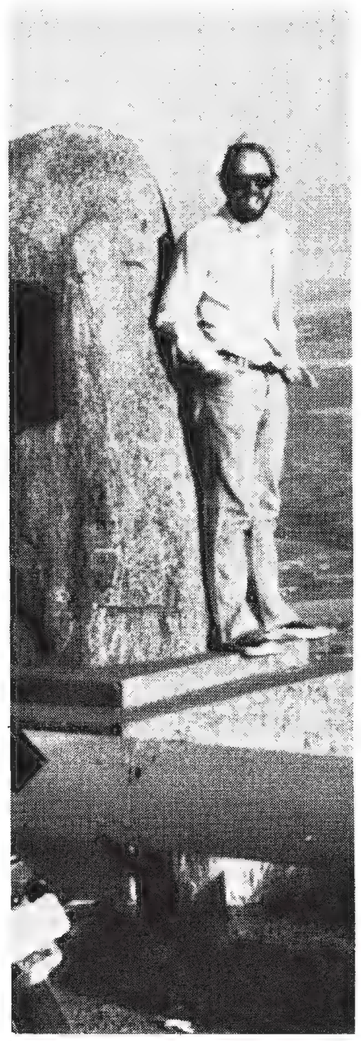
Answer: We've all had the enlightening experience of editing Marvel's madcap fan magazine — and, reckoning accordingly, this is FOOM Phase Six.

I suppose a modest introduction of sorts is in order here. So be it. I'm a Gemini, of course, afflicted with all the attendant introspection and inner conflict that comes with that astrological sign. At 24, I'm also a free lance fanatic and student of life, eking out a Bohemian existence in the great heart of inflation. At different times in the past I have been Associate Editor of both Marvel's color comics and black-and-white magazines; too, at one time or another, I have written Dracula, Man-Wolf, Iron Fist and Thor for Marvel. I'm a motorcycle maniac, a science fiction freak, and a lover of loud rock music. And I look funny (see accompanying photo).

Okay, now that all that's out of the way, you're probably wondering how my advent in the editorial chair will affect FOOM. A few new features are in the works, such as the page of absolutely last-minute newsflashes that makes its appearance this issue; some favorite old features will return, such as Bullpen biographies like those about Gene Colan and Steve Leialoha in this ish; the *Mighty Marvel Mini-Items* department is back to stay; and, of course, all the usual fantastic FOOM features will abound.

As always, Marvelites, your own sensational suggestions are solicited on how to make FOOM the best fanzine ever devoted to a blushin' Bullpen. Who would you like to see interviewed? What type of behind-the-scenes information interests you? What have you always wanted to know about Marvel?

Next, you're no doubt wondering whatever happened to the interviews with Jack Kirby and John Warner that were promised in previous issues. I know, it seems like an impossible coincidence, but not when you consider the capricious set of circumstances that has continually beleagured our bumbling Bullpen; in other words, they were *lost*. Both of them. However, we did consult each of the aforementioned gentlemen for this meaty installment of *InFOOMation*, so all was not abandoned and at least some of their own words appear at last.

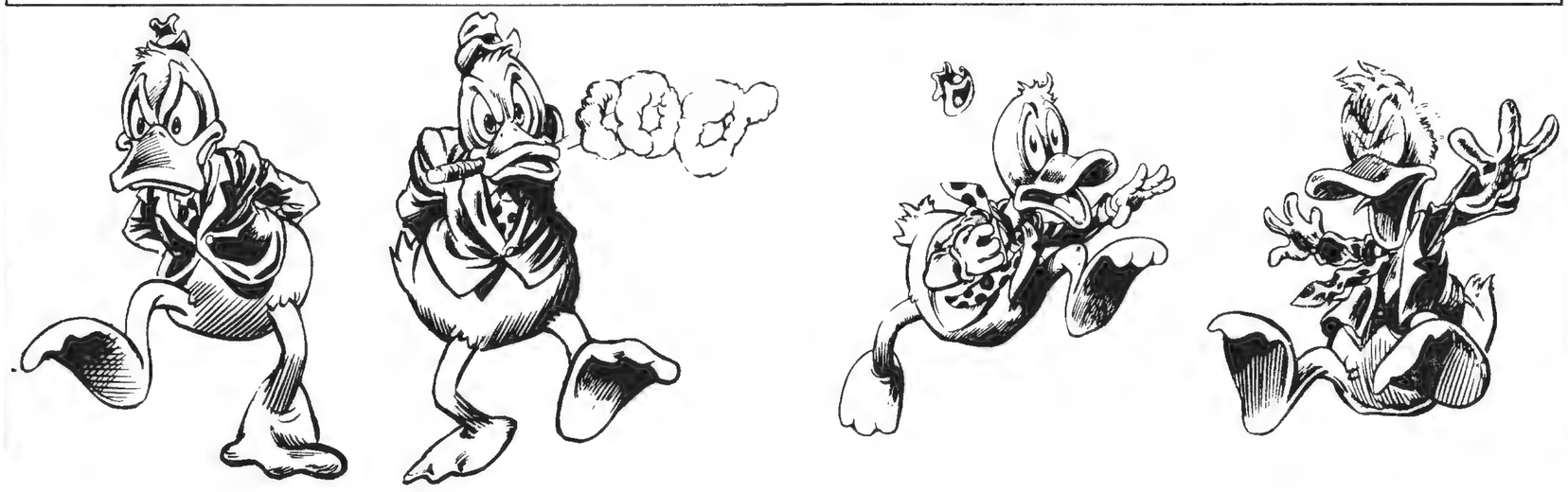


Unfortunately, as I'm sure you've noticed, we had to raise the price of this book a couple issues ago; the escalating economy is by now self-explanatory; but what you may not have noticed is that you're getting more than *twice* as much content, despite the fact that we have not added any extra pages. How was this seemingly magickal feat accomplished? Through the simple expedient of using much smaller typefaces. If you compare this issue of FOOM to one from about three years ago, you'll easily be able to note the difference — we're putting about twice as many words on a page!

Some special features scheduled for future numbers of FOOM are an in-depth interview with Marie (the She) Severin, a spectacular Stan Lee issue, a detailed text/photo study of exactly how a comic book is created (from inception through production to the newsstand), an intensive interview with Jazzy Johnny Romita, the Irving Awards, and far more frenetic photos and fact-packed features than ever before!

All right, I've primed you properly for FOOM Phase Six. Now you're on your own to oggle this *waugh*-boggling HOWARD THE DUCK campaign issue. Keep your feathers dry, your webbed feet clean, and your beak held high.

'Nuff said! —DAK



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this issue is
de DUCK ated to:

STEVE GERBER
VAL MAYERIK
FRANK BRUNNER
JOHN BUSCEMA
GENE COLAN
STEVE LEIALOHA

This year, the Nation celebrates two hundred years of political quackery by offering its citizens a choice for their leadership from between a Grand Rapids rattletrap and a well-oiled peanut with a roasted-in-the-shell smile.

Well, heck...what's another four-year debacle?

We Americans are, after all, a hardy people. We've survived more political and social traumas in the past twenty years than most nations face in a thousand. Korea. McCarthy. The Cold War. The Cuban missiles. Assassinations. Vietnam. Watergate. Campus unrest. Urban unrest. Resthome unrest. And all the rest. We like our sociology spicy.

On the other hand, some of us think we've been living in this bowl of chili too long. Some of us think it's time for a change—not retrogression to some imagined idyllic past, but a brash, bold bump into the future. Some of us who think that way are throwing our support to HOWARD THE DUCK in 1976, because, in the Duck's own words, "I'll throw it right back atcha."

The politics of responsiveness. Ain't it grand?

Well, some of us think it is. And some of us think that you, too, owe it to yourself, your God, your country, and your Great Aunt Jennie to throw your support after our support—good after bad, as it were. Or perhaps pearls after swine. Whatever. It's getting late, and some of us don't think so good in the wee hours of the morning.

Anyway, it's like this. We've got this nifty HTD Presidential Button for sale, see? It's red, white, blue and duck-colored. It measures two inches in every direction except thick. And some of us think you should buy one. If you think so, too, you should send $1.00 plus 25¢ postage & handling for each button you want to HOWARD's campaign headquarters.

And that's not all...**pilgrim.**

If you send another $1.25 to the same address, you've doomed yourself to receive the super-deluxe HTD Campaign Portrait, an 8x10 duck-lover's dream, printed in warm sepia tones on heavy stock, and suitable for framing. It's mailed direct to you in plain brown biodegradable wrapping, suitable for throwing away, after your support.

Use the handy coupon below to order yours. And remember, some of us are watching you!

Okay, Duck-O, shoot the works! Here's the campaign paraphernalia I want:

☐ Official HTD buttons @ $1.25 ea. (incl. pstg).

☐ Official HTD portraits @ $1.25 ea. (incl. pstg).

☐ Mighty bodies with tree-trunk legs and rippling arms @ $229.95 ea. (incl. feet).

Mail to: STEVE GERBER, c/o Mad Genius Associates,
850 Seventh Ave., Room 806, New York, N.Y. 10019

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

I promise to use my buttons & portrait only in self-defense. Same goes for my body.

The Foom interview:

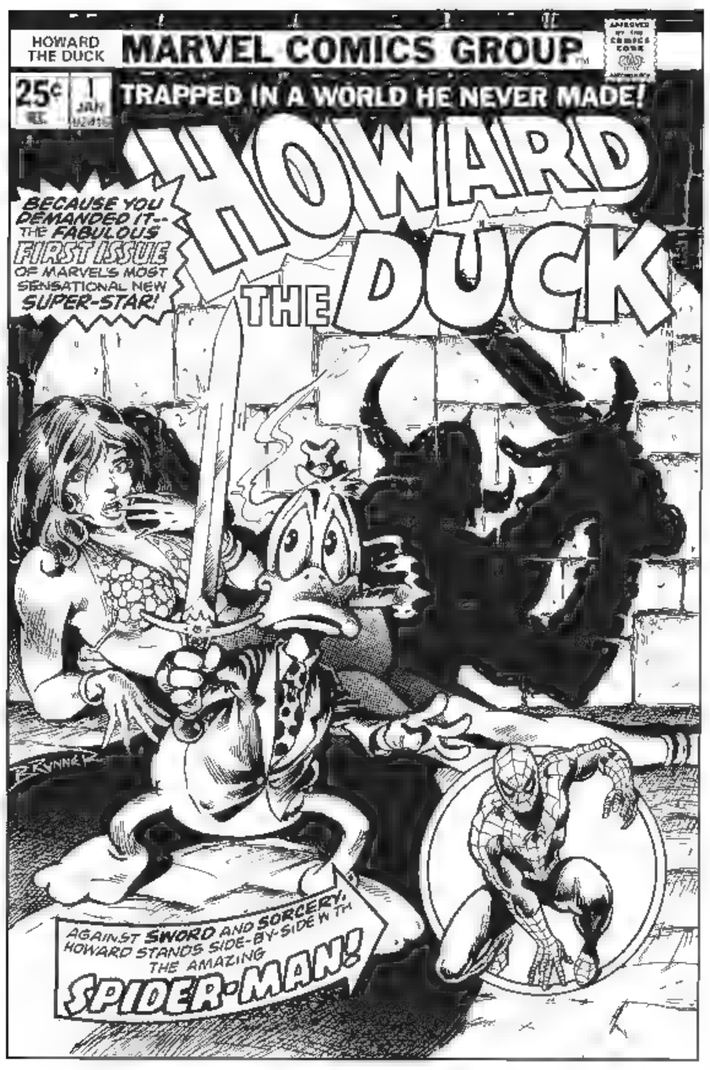
Steve Gerber

Conducted by
David Anthony Kraft

Articulate, bursting with ideas and opinions, Steve (Baby) Gerber is an absolute wonder to interview – even at 5 o'clock on a muggy Monday morning. He was born 20 September 1947 in St. Louis, Missouri, and graduated from St. Louis University in 1969 with a major in Radio-TV Communications and a minor in Creative Writing. Steve stands six feet tall, has black hair, brown eyes, and is nearsighted ("extremely – which may also account for some of the opinions expressed in this interview," he admits anxiously.) Despite a pronounced distaste for melodrama in his scripting, he nonetheless persists in living a very melodramatic life. He can't help it; it's an unconscious compulsion. Gerber is also paranoid, and at one point attempted to pass this feature off as an interview with a Life Model Decoy. Gifted with a talent for the weird and offbeat, Steve is the driving force behind that feisty little fowl, Howard the Duck. And now, let's let Steve speak for himself...

FOOM: What kind of childhood did you have?

STEVE: Dull. Well, not *really* dull. I got involved with some pretty strange escapades from time to time. I grew up in a middle-class suburban community, went through the same school system my whole life, lived in the same house from the time I was born until the time I was 22 and married, and then moved into another dwelling. I don't think there was enough instability in the events of my life; any instability was internal. After awhile, with that much sameness in one's existence, if some variety or even some danger doesn't creep in occasionally, and the person is at all a thinking person, I believe he starts to go insane. And, really, that's what happened to me, I think, at some point. I reached a crisis where rebellion became not something fashionable, not something even governed by any particular principles, just something I had to do in order to keep my mind alive. My home had become an anaesthetic, and it was like I was living under that anesthetic, just listening to the voices of my mother and father and brothers and sisters and the television set, which was on constantly, and receiving no new input, so I got involved in the whole hippie culture, but without any deeply-felt commitment. I was a participant/observer, one step back from everything. Close enough to touch, and close enough to get hurt a couple of times, but never fully committed to it. I spent a lot of time in Gaslight Square, which was St. Louis' one-block Greenwich Village, and came in contact with people who were doing drugs and doing the whole flowers and beads thing, and I was involved with the protest against the Viet Nam War. But I was always too academic, too conscientiously critical, to throw myself into it totally. There seemed to be a certain shallowness of philosophy, somehow, and beyond that, even, there was a lot of violence associated with that culture, at least by the time it got to St. Louis in '67 or '68. It was the hippie scene, but it was mixed with the bikers, the Hell's Angels types; also, there was still a decided residue of grease, because St. Louis is kind of a half-breed city. It's sort of Southern, and sort of Midwestern, but it really isn't either. There's a tendency to violence among people in that area of the country, there's no way around that. The easiest way to solve an argument is, y'know, to fight it out, because they don't like to mess with words.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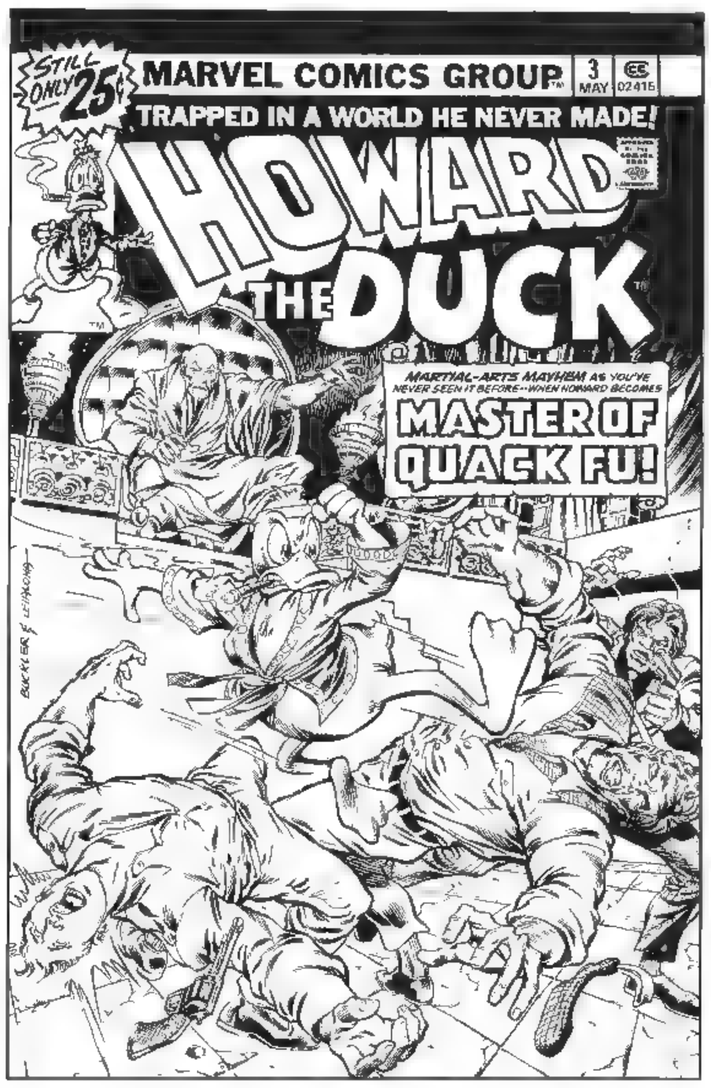
TRAPPED IN A WORLD HE NEVER MADE!
HOWARD THE DUCK
BECAUSE YOU DEMANDED IT-- THE FABULOUS FIRST ISSUE OF MARVEL'S MOST SENSATIONAL NEW SUPER-STAR!
AGAINST SWORD AND SORCERY, HOWARD STANDS SIDE-BY-SIDE WITH THE AMAZING
SPIDER-MAN!

FOOM: Isn't that a correlation to the standard solution in comic book stories?
STEVE: Yeah, it is. It is. I found most of those people, incidentally, to be fascinated with comic books at the time. I loaned my entire *SPIDER-MAN* collection to a houseful of hippies for awhile, and they avidly read through all of them, about a hundred issues.
FOOM: When did you first decide to become a writer — and why?
STEVE: I knew I was going to be a writer, back when I was about five years old, because there didn't really seem to be much else worth doing. That's it. It's the only profession I could think of that looked like it would hold any interest for me.
FOOM: So how did you get into comics?
STEVE: I found out about comic books from watching television. The first contact I ever had with comic books in any form was the *Superman* TV show, and I was utterly fascinated by it. Then, when I found out there were printed stories about this guy, I became interested in those, too, and that led to Batman, and that led to the original Captain Marvel, and that led to about twelve years of reading things, y'know, right up through the first issue of the *FANTASTIC FOUR* and so on. I got into the business as a result of meeting Roy Thomas and corresponding with him for about ten years, off and on, through one of Julius Schwartz's letters pages in an early issue of *Hawkman*.
FOOM: But you're both from St. Louis?
STEVE: Roy's from Jackson, Missouri, which is about 120 miles south of St. Louis, so we saw each other infrequently, and when he moved to Arnold to teach at Fox High School, we saw each other more frequently. Arnold is almost a suburb of St. Louis. And after he went to New York — first to work for National for about a week, and then to Marvel — I came up to visit him for a couple of weeks over vacation the year I graduated from high school. Met Stan for the first time during those two weeks, and then some seven years later I had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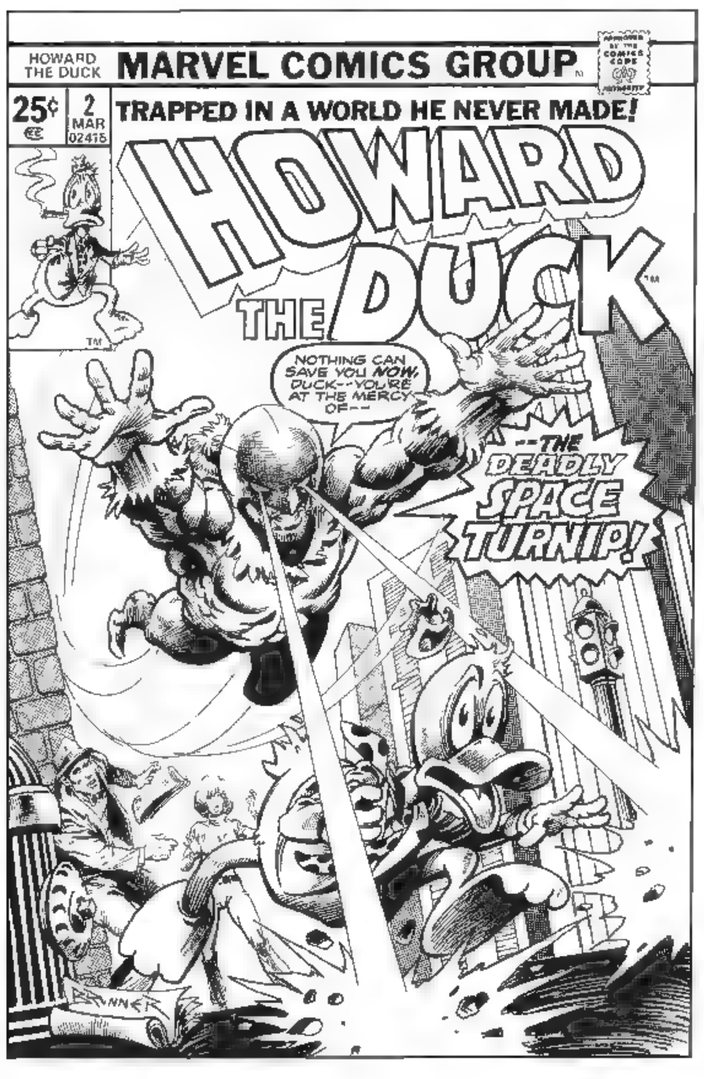
MASTER OF QUACK FU!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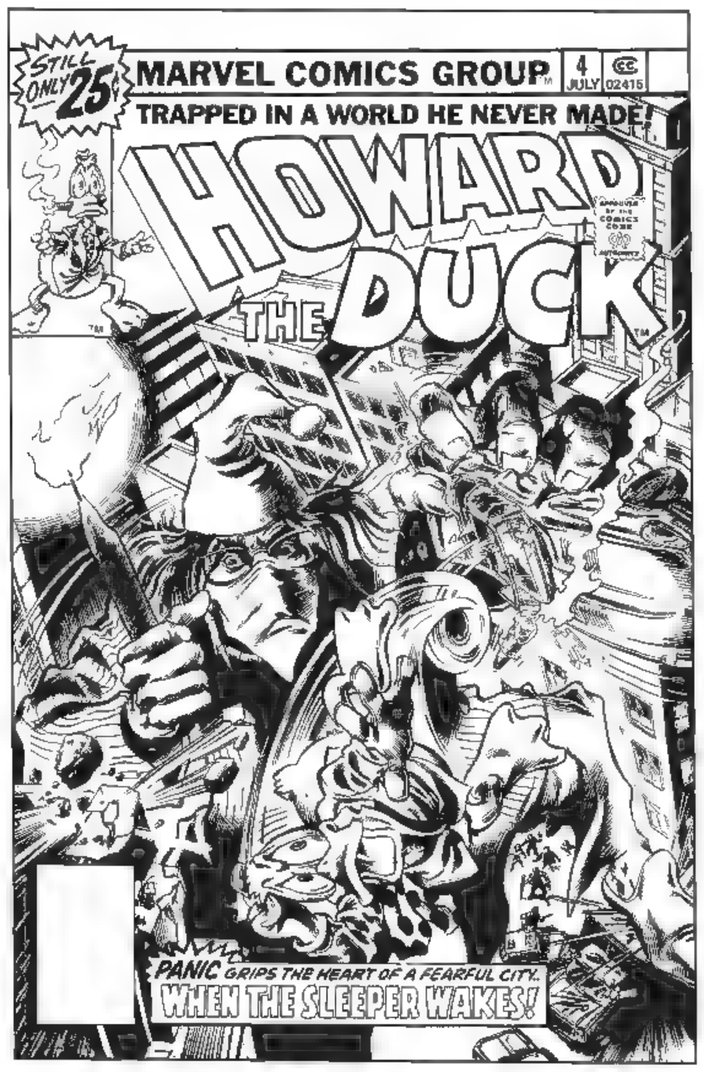
graduated from college and gone through a couple years of graduate school and was working in an advertising agency — and suffocating — and wrote a letter to Roy that said, "Help! I'm dying. Do something!" It came exactly at the time, luckily, that he was promoted to editor and Stan was appointed publisher, and they were talking about expanding the line greatly. I was taken on as an editorial assistant, and that's how I wound up working in comics.
FOOM: Do you have any regrets?
STEVE: Do I have any regrets that I left advertising behind? None. Do I have any regrets that I got into comics? No. Do I have any regrets that I've stayed here this long? Oh, reams and volumes! A lot of things have happened since I've been in the business that I regret, I guess, but it's silly to bother with them. That's passed; I'm more concerned about the future.
FOOM: Who are your influences?
STEVE: Stan. Roy. Gerry Conway was very helpful when I got into the business. In terms of other literary influ-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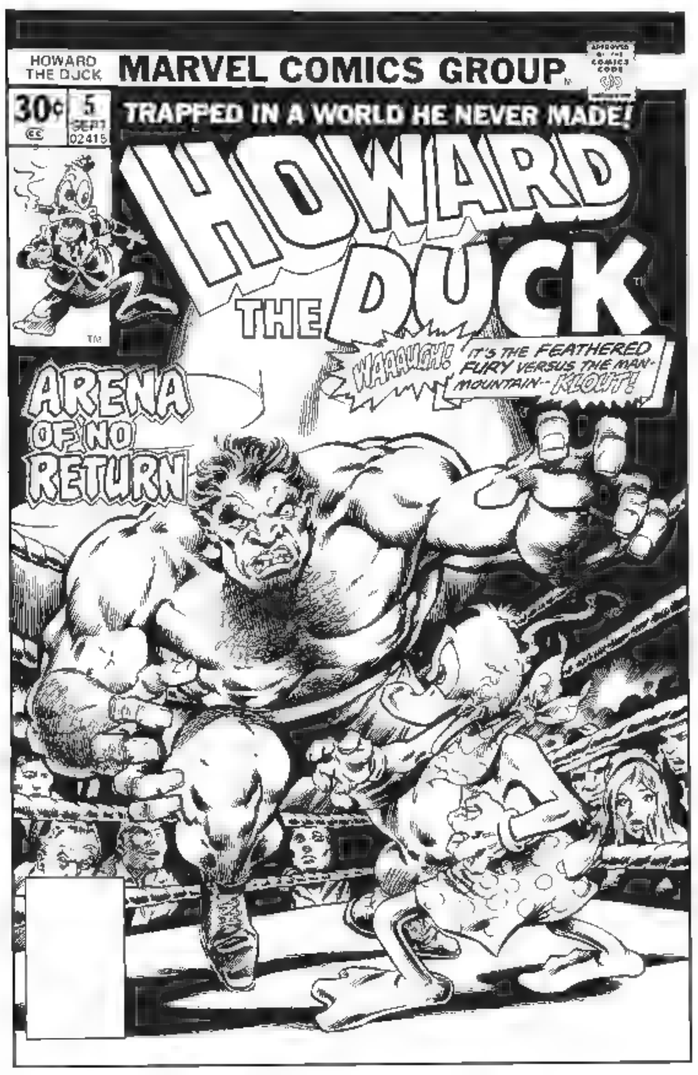
TRAPPED IN A WORLD HE NEVER MADE!
HOWARD THE DUCK
PANIC GRIPS THE HEART OF A FEARFUL CITY.
WHEN THE SLEEPER WAKES!

ences, it's very strange, because I didn't read much when I was a kid. I'm reading more now than I ever have at any previous time in my life. So essentially I created my writing style out of my own facility with words. I've been told that it resembles various writers' styles; they seem to be, generally, people who have the same background as myself — Jewish home, middle class, growing up in the 40s and 50s, that sort of thing. I find that interesting, 'cause I have almost really no literary background, despite the fact that one of my studies was English and another was Creative Writing and Communication. I really had very few influences in the past. I'm influenced now by everything I read, and consciously incorporate certain aspects of that input into my work, ex-

perimentally. But there's nobody I can point to, really, as a major influence, except possibly The Beatles. Seriously.

FOOM: Who do you write for — yourself, the fans, or the editor?

STEVE: None of the above. The stories — generally, at their best — seem to tell themselves. I don't ordinarily start with a particular theme or message in mind. I'll begin plotting a story, and it'll take its own direction, and if it's a *good* story, then it'll be written the way it told itself to me, rather than my trying to shape it in any particular direction. Sometimes, of course, there are conscious things you do with structure and with pacing, and that sort of thing, but the actual events of the story and the particular characterizations and things are generally determined by the story or the interplay of the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TRAPPED IN A WORLD HE NEVER MADE!
HOWARD THE DUCK
WAAUGH!
IT'S THE FEATHERED FURY VERSUS THE MAN-MOUNTAIN--KLOUT!
ARENA OF NO RETURN

characters, themselves.

FOOM: Doesn't that mean you please yourself?

STEVE: Well, let's put it this way: When a story presents itself to me that way, it generally pleases me, it sometimes pleases the readers, and it almost never pleases the editors. (Laughter.)

FOOM: Do you feel any sense of moral obligation to the readers of comics?

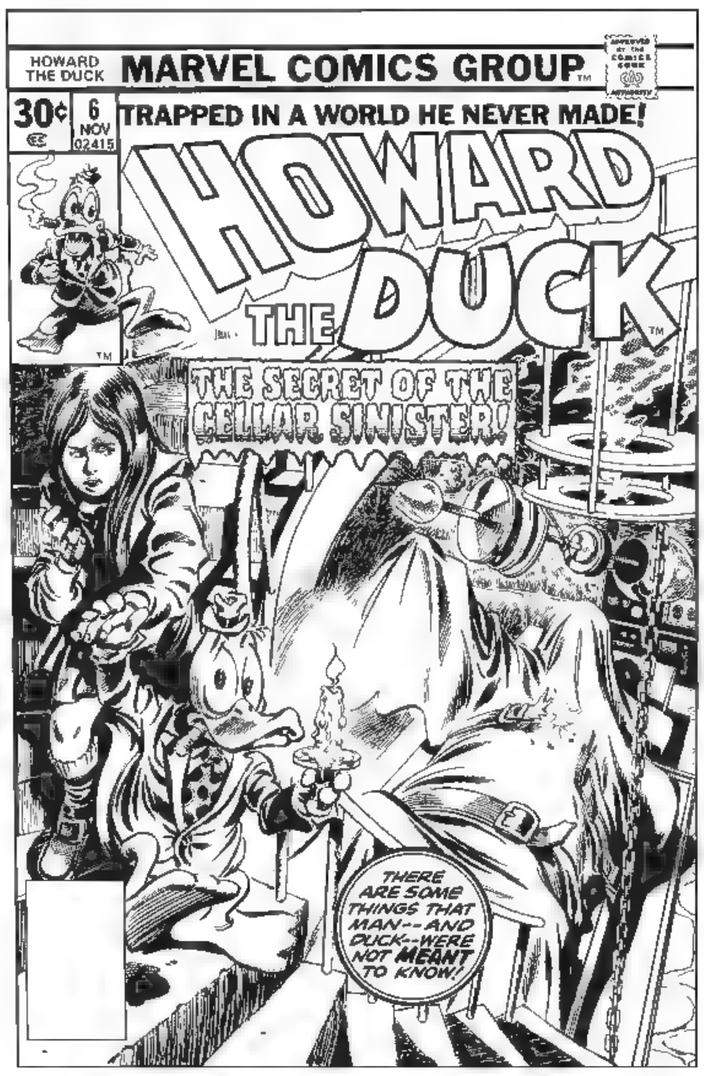
STEVE: The same obligation I feel to any other human being — not to lie to them. Beyond that — no. Maybe if you defined "moral obligation" more clearly. Do you mean to educate them, or to uplift them, or what?

FOOM: Specifically, then, do you think violence is a necessary part of comics?

STEVE: I think that, yes, actually violence is a necessary part of comics as they're structured today, because, y'know, as I define violence that's the Hulk punching the Abomination in the face or Spider-Man wading into a gang of bank robbers and punching them out and tying them up with webs and leaving them for the police. I mean, we euphemize that and call it "action," because nobody *bleeds* in those sequences. I find the hero/villain aspects the dullest things about any of the books. I've always been much more interested in the interplay of personalities. I do feel — and this gets back to what I said about a moral obligation — that showing somebody being pounded into the ground, and depicting neither combatant suffering pain from it *is* lying, in a sense, and so to that extent, y'know, I think that the same moral obligaion holds.

FOOM: I remember you were having a crisis of sorts, a year ago, about the violence and whether there was anything positive in the comics.

STEVE: I've never completely resolved that crisis. Violence is generally presented as a solution to problems in comics, because, being the illustrated form that they are, they tend to over-simplify, reduce everything to its most basic. Pure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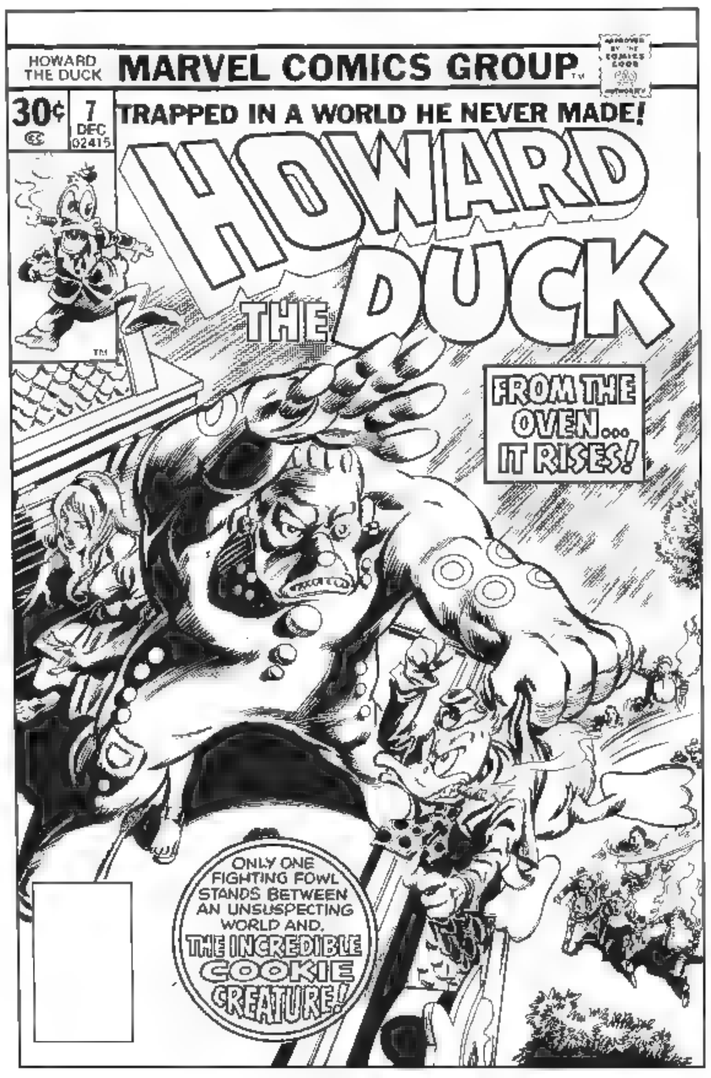
TRAPPED IN A WORLD HE NEVER MADE!
HOWARD THE DUCK
THE SECRET OF THE CELLAR SINISTER!
THERE ARE SOME THINGS THAT MAN--AND DUCK--WERE NOT MEANT TO KNOW!

Good vs. Pure Evil, for example, is a conflict which rarely occurs in the real world. It's a set of circumstances that doesn't exist. The way comics are structured now, they teach very positive values and brutal means for achieving them. And readers tend, I think, to take this bizarre lesson seriously, as if it were real. It's why I would prefer, say, to be

doing a strip like *HOWARD THE DUCK* to a strip like ... well ... I could say Spider-Man, but even my own character, *OMEGA*, because with the duck there's a certain amount of unreality presupposed. The creature himself is unreal, and so you can forgive certain other reductivist and retrograde tendencies of the medium. The problem with a strip like *OMEGA*, where the characters are at least pretenses at reality, is that you can never go far enough, you can never show how filthy those streets are in Hell's Kitchen, you can never show the dope dealers in the corridors of the school that James-Michael attends, because the code won't allow it; you can't show what would really happen to somebody if they got beat up as badly as John was beaten up by Nick and his hoods, because even though those kids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HOWARD THE DUCK
FROM THE OVEN... IT RISES!
ONLY ONE FIGHTING FOWL STANDS BETWEEN AN UNSUSPECTING WORLD AND THE INCREDIBLE COOKIE CREATURE!

see it every day, it's simply not allowed because it's not "within the bounds of good taste."

FOOM: Are you reaching for anything beyond commercial success with your comic writing?

STEVE: I question your wording there, because I don't think I'm reaching for it; I think I would like to achieve it, but it's not conscious effort most of the time. There are times — like the kung fu story in the Duck book — where I have a particular message I want to get across, and I wanted to do that in a way that would be commercially viable, because I wanted the book to sell and get into people's hands so that they would see the message.

FOOM: Is there anything you think *shouldn't* be depicted in comics?

STEVE: No. Absolutely not. I don't think there's any aspect of life that people shouldn't know about. Ignorance is not bliss. Ignorance is a trap; the less you're aware of, the more easily you can be deceived and seduced. I don't think there's *anything* that shouldn't be presented in comic books, no matter how horrible or, for that matter, how lovely. I wouldn't say comic books should *only* present the negativistic side of things that cannot be depicted presently; there are an awful lot of positive things, too, that we can't show in comic books.

FOOM: Do you find that the production schedules allow for a proper gestation period?

STEVE: Sometimes, yes, and sometimes, no. Sometimes a story will come to you in five minutes, and other times it takes five weeks. In the first case, of course, they allow for it; in the second case, they don't. Sounds like I'm equivocating on every question you ask. (Laughter.)

FOOM: How was Howard the Duck created?

STEVE: As a joke. It was the only sight gag I could think of to top Korrek jumping out of the jar of peanut butter in *FEAR #19*, I told Val to have a duck come waddling out of the bushes. I didn't mention the cigar; the cigar was Val Mayerik's creation. So was Howard's clothing. I just told Val, "Don't make him look too much like Donald, and for God's sake, don't dress him in a sailor suit." Because I included Howard's dialogue for that particular sequence of panels — "Clam up, buddy, you don't know what absurdity is," etc. — I think Val drew the kind of duck who might deliver that line. That's where the cigar came from, and that's where the kind of tacky suit and the rumpled hat came from, and the minute I saw it, without even knowing what the duck's name was (we didn't name him 'til next issue), I knew we had something more on our hands than just, y'know, a four panel gag or something. He was a very real character from the very beginning, and the easiest one of the characters in that whole sequence of bent-out-of-shape-reality stories to write. It was a good indication there was substance there.

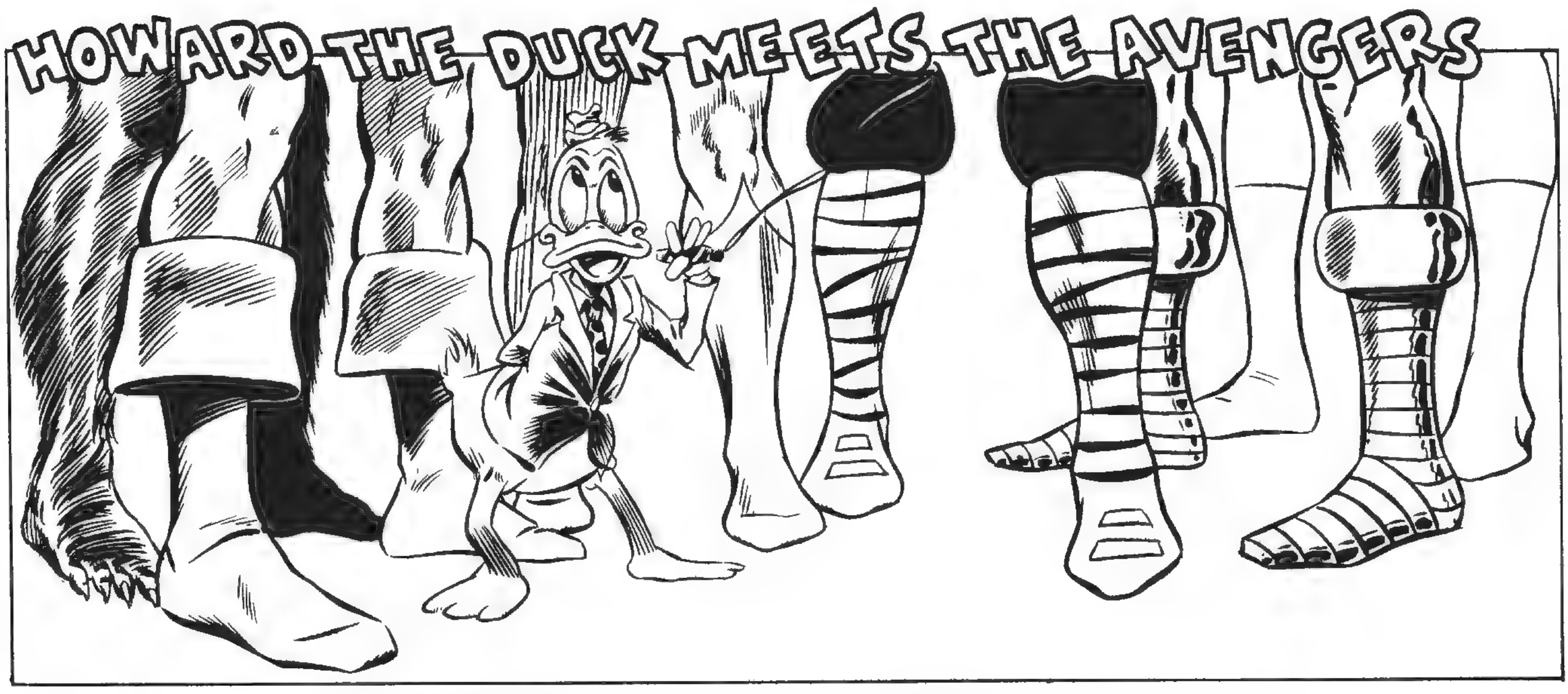
FOOM: Did you abandon Howard at that point, or did you think about him in terms of future stories at all?

STEVE: I was asked to abandon him. They were afraid that the appearance of the duck in the Man-Thing storyline was going to spoil the mood of that book, and so I killed him off about halfway into *MAN-THING #1*. My own feeling was that I wished he could be brought back, but I truly felt he was lost, and I figured the readers would probably not respond to this at all. Everytime you try to do something a little outrageous — or, at least, at *that* time — something outside the normal bounds of Marvel reality, you got letters protesting and saying, "Why are you being silly with our funny books?" (Laughter.) "Don't you know funny books are supposed to be serious!" And this time must have been the exception that proves the rule, y'know. People were taken with him immediately. The office was flooded with letters; there was the one wacko who sent a duck carcass from Canada —

FOOM: Yeah, I remember that.

STEVE: — saying, "Murderers, how dare you kill off this duck?" There was the incident at a San Diego Comics Convention where somebody asked Roy, I believe, who was speaking there, whether Howard would ever be coming back, and the entire auditorium stood up and applauded. Stan was being asked about it everyplace he went on the college circuit. It was decided as a result of those incidents to give Howard another shot in the *GIANT-SIZE MAN-THING* book, as a back-up feature, and the response to that led to his getting his own book.

FOOM: How much of Howard is actu-



First the Defenders, and now — ? (Art by Dancin' Dave Wenzel & Fluffy Duffy Vohland.)

Artistic evolution of a duck: the four faces of Howard.

Val Mayerik & Sal Trapani

Frank Brunner & Steve Leialoha

John Buscema & Leialoha

Gene Colan & Leialoha

ally you?

STEVE: Howard is my conscience. It's more like he behaves, generally, the way I would *like* to behave. He's a lot nosier than I am, and a lot more demonstrative, and a lot more sarcastic, usually, than I am. I went through a period like that, I guess, during my college days, but Howard is still like that. A lot more caustic.

FOOM: What's your opinion of the state of comic books today?

STEVE: I think they're atrophying. As things are I think kids are changing, and the books aren't changing nearly fast enough to keep pace with them. We're reaching a very limited segment of people — people who are deeply into a kind of fantasy that bears almost no relation to reality — and I don't think most kids are like that anymore. I think that has a place in their lives, but if you take a look at the changes in children's literature, jesus, they've outdistanced the comics by light years in terms of the subject matter that they're treating. I'm not sure if, according to the provisions of the code, we're even allowed to do a story about a broken home, or about the effects of divorce on a child, or any of the things that really *matter* in a kid's life. If you mention that to many comic book writers now, they look at you as if you're crazy. "That's terrible, that's heavy stuff, the kids don't want to read about that." Well, that's bull, y'know? They're assuming because a story treats a serious subject it can't be entertaining. That assumption indicates to me a too-narrow definition of entertainment, and also (paradoxically, when considered in terms of this medium) a lack of imagination as to how those subjects could be treated. I think there's very little imagination in comics right now.

FOOM: Whose fault do you think that is?

STEVE: I don't think anybody gets off clean on this. The code has a lot to do with it. The fear of the publishers to enact changes in the code or abolish it altogether. The limitations of the writers, most of whom are really not educated in the learning processes of children. And, of course, everybody for that same failure of imagination — for not being able to see how something like that could be accomplished.

FOOM: You keep mentioning children. Do you think the readership consists of children?

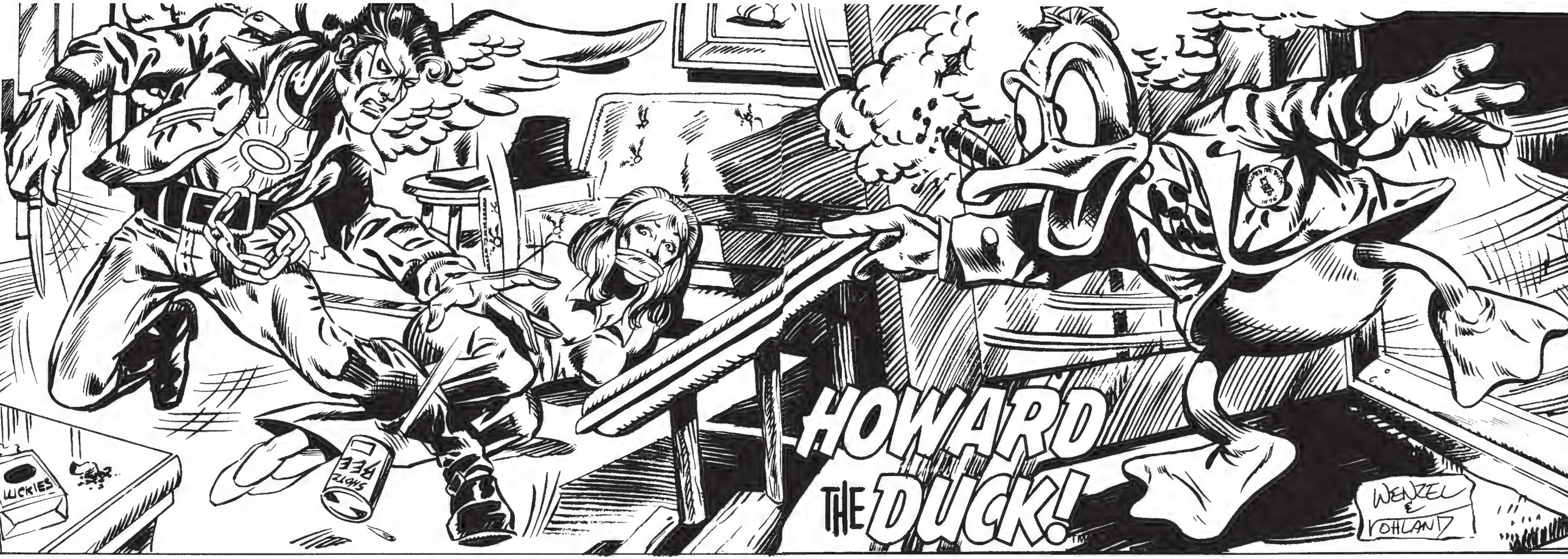
STEVE: Primarily, I know it does. Children and adolescents. I mean, of course, there are older readers, but there again, I'm afraid a very specific and limited kind of older reader. We tend to attract the same sort of readers who become Trekkies and Satanists. That's a gross over-generalization, but I sometimes worry that very few of our older readers are what could be called — *normal*. By the same token, I don't want to give anybody the misimpression that *I'm* normal. I think it's okay to be crazy. I think very few people, really, in 20th Century America aren't *slightly* neurotic, in some fashion or another, and I'm not even sure that the most common neuroses are the best, *ie* that what we consider normal is in any way desirable. But what I'm afraid of is that many of the older readers we attract are not just interestingly out of step, or marching to a different drummer, but stumbling around blindly to no beat at all. I'm not *sure* about that — I know it doesn't apply universally — but I think, in large part, it may be true.

FOOM: Don't you think there's a certain amount of the "youth culture" that crosses over from rock music and movies — media freaks, in general?

STEVE: Yeah, and I think those people probably account for the inapplicability of that general statement, but I don't think those people are going to be with us for long, because the innovations are coming too slow. Most of the people in comic books right now were comic book fans, growing up, and I've always had this theory that certain of these people, to a greater or lesser extent, grew up with minds that could be approved by the Comics Code Authority. They could have that seal stamped on their foreheads. They don't understand any of the more complex or sophisticated forms that came into existence in the 60s. Comic books have stayed in the 50s, since the 50s.

FOOM: Exactly what do you *mean* by that?

STEVE: I'm talking about subject matter — *content* — not syle. Stan's method came into effect as a matter of expediency. The whole renaissance in rock



Teen Angel faces off against the fearless fowl in a flight of fantasy by Wenzel & Vohland.

music took place in the 60s, the whole renaissance in film took place in the 60s, there was a whole cultural upheavel. Everything was turned upside down during the decade — except comics, which although they expanded their horizons slightly, mostly because of Stan, pretty much stayed the same in terms of what was acceptable as *subject matter* for comic books. Stan found new ways of treating that old subject matter. He could make an alien race a lot more interesting than the Kryptonians, for example, evolve different kinds of culture and just look at things with a much more cosmic perspective than a lot of the earlier writers could. But there was this incredible change — the whole "psychedelic" thing, for lack of a better word — going on in the 60s that most of the writers of comic books, I'm afraid, because they were so deeply into comic books, as fans, missed entirely.

FOOM: In most other fields, a writer is expected to write from experience, whereas comic book writers...

STEVE: Their primary experience is comics. In fact, that's even true of me to a large extent. What happened was, at about age 15 or 16, I got very fed up with fandom, because I could no longer read the fanzines. They were written in a foreign language, using all sorts of strange abbreviations and truncated forms, and I couldn't tell an LoC from a TBG from an XYZ, after awhile. It was a completely other language, y'know, and when they stopped using English and got into that sort of bastardized argot, I just gave up. I've always had a great loyalty to the English language, even though this interview doesn't show it. Actually, a couple of things *have* changed in comics. For awhile there, until Gerry was instructed to bring Gwen Stacy back into the *SPIDER-MAN* book, we really had people convinced that unexpected things could happen in the books again — that characters *could* die, that the ending of every story was *not* predictable. I think we've since eviscerated that believability again, too; we're right back where we started. In terms of predictability, comic books have reached the stage now where you know, say as on *Star Trek* when Kirk took down Sulu, Spock, and two security guards as part of a landing party, who was going to get "offed." (Laughter.) We're really at that point now, and I think some drastic changes have to be made.

FOOM: Do you think comics are relevant?

STEVE: No, I don't. I use the word relevance in the broadest sense. I don't think they have anything to do with people's lives. I'm not even sure that the comics provide a real and necessary escape anymore.

FOOM: Isn't there a conflict between escapism and relevance?

STEVE: I have never been a big fan of escapist literature, as ridiculous as that sounds. The things I liked about the comics, particularly about Stan's comics in the early '60s, was the fact that by comparison to the Mort Weisinger *Superman* comics of the same era, there was so much reality. It's what changed the whole shape of the comics industry to begin with — the fact that the heroes began to have personalities, they began to have problems, Spider-Man was enmeshed in an on-going financial crisis. When those elements became commonplace, it seemed like the next step should have been to intensify the reality a little bit. But that never happened.

FOOM: The readers probably expect me to ask your future plans for Howard.

STEVE: I get asked that a lot, particularly at conventions. People really don't understand that I don't have Howard plotted ten issues in advance, and I wouldn't tell anybody what was going to be in those ten issues if I did. I stopped reading *The Comic Reader* when I was a fan, in fact, because I didn't want to know what was happening in the damn books before they came out. Y'know, what's the point of reading them, then? You can just read the synopses, and then put away the books on your shelf, and you don't have to bother with them. Since then, I and several other writers have, I think, wisely refused to give out the endings to any of the stories to TCR. They were upset about that at first, I think, but later came to understand why we were doing it. We wanted to put that element of surprise back in it, even for the fans.

FOOM: What about *OMEGA?* How far in advance do you have that plotted, since it seems to have more of a master structure?

STEVE: It has a definite direction. It does not have incidents plotted out all the way through issue # 100 or anything like that. We know where it's going; we know where James-Michael is going; we know certain things about which characters are going to be introduced into the strip and what part they're going to play. In some ways, it's the most calculated strip I've ever done, and largely that's because of Mary's predisposition toward structure. We know who the teachers are, for instance, that we have introduced into the story. Ruth and Amber were specifically introduced to play off each other in a particular way and create a particular kind of confusion in James-Michael. Richard Rory is going to be coming into the strip — maybe even will be, by the time this interview is published, and he's going to provide the male figure that's been missing from James-Michael's life since his parents were killed. We do know, even though we're probably not going to reveal it for quite awhile, what the relationship between James-Michael and Omega is. So all that stuff actually is "plotted" in that sense. The concepts are all there; exactly how they're going to take shape, I don't know.

FOOM: How do you and Mary Skrenes collaborate?

STEVE: It varies. We plot the books together, generally, just bouncing ideas back and forth off each other. Then, after the panel descriptions have been done, which Mary generally does, either she will sketch in suggestions of dialogue, from which I'll work toward the final

The Foom interview:

version of the dialogue, or sometimes we just split up the pages and she'll do whole pages and I'll do whole pages. Most of the time I write the captions; Mary is responsible for an awful lot of the dialogue. It's an interesting collaboration. It changes on every issue.

FOOM: How does your present work differ from things you've done in the past?

STEVE: It's a lot better. Have you ever read my Sub-Mariners? (Laughter.) I've gained a certain mastery of the medium since then, y'know. I came into comics, and the first few stories I did—true to the theory of beginner's luck — were not bad, and then by my sixth or seventh story, things really began to get crappy, and stayed that way for about a year while I learned what the hell I was doing. It's been a steady climb ever since then. You can almost date it from the issue Bob Brown took over *DAREDEVIL*. Things have been getting steadily better with occasional, inevitable dips, of course, since then.

FOOM: Do you intend to continue in your present mold, or are you contemplating any big changes?

STEVE: Two answers to that. One, I don't contemplate writing comics forever. Two, I don't want my next strip to be another Howard the Duck. If I do create another comic book series, it's going to be something different, probably totally a 180° polar opposite of Howard. The Howard book and the Omega book debuted at about the same time, and I'm glad that one was a serious series and one was a funny series. (I'm not sure which was which, though.) I don't wanna keep doing the same things over and over again. I don't want people to expect the next Howard the Duck from me. I'm trying, really, to stay one step ahead of the office, and just give them what they don't expect each time. People forget that I live with that duck on a day-to-day basis, y'know, and I almost wish he'd go away and let me alone! (Laughter.) It's like, I love him dearly, but I don't want to spend all my time thinking about it. I'm really more interested in The Next Project now than I am in the duck, in a lot of ways.

FOOM: What is your next project? Do

continued

About The Artists:

by Roger Stern

GENIAL GENE COLAN

The only problem with Eugene Colan is that he is just *too* damn good as an artist. Look at a job by Colán — any job — and you will find a degree of professionalism, quality, and style that rivals the biggest guns of the comics industry. The verve and atmosphere of his work shines throughout some eighty issues of DAREDEVIL, over fifty issues of TOMB OF DRACULA, and numerous old IRON MAN, SUB-MARINER, and CAPTAIN AMERICA strips that old-time readers still recall with a wistful smile.

But if Colan is such a great artist, why is it that we so rarely hear his name mentioned when award time rolls around?

Because — like we said — the man is simply *too* good.

A typical letter to a magazine like TOMB OF DRACULA will go on and on about a particular issue's story and subplot developments, and then — almost as an afterthought — will add "Gene and Tom (Palmer) did their usual great job." It's that "usual great job" that has paradoxically stolen some of the limelight which Genial Gene so richly deserves. It's just that readers have gotten so used to getting such a fine quality of art from Gene, that their raves of appreciation have become somewhat tempered with an edge of familiarity. But if his public might be a bit recalcitrant at times about praising his art, Colan's colleagues are far from it.

"I don't believe what that man can do," says long-time DRACULA writer, Marv Wolfman. "Gene's a real miracle worker! No kidding, he can draw anything. I sometimes wish we could shoot the art directly from his pencils, because so few inkers can really do him justice."

"Gene's stuff is really fine," agrees artist Allen Milgrom, "but he's really hard to ink. I mean, I've only done a couple of ink jobs over his pencils — some covers — and I was really only satisfied with one of them. Gene tends to work in tones rather than in lines; he's such a good artist, and he puts so much work into his pencils, that it's really tough to do them justice in the inking. An inker really has to work at it. I personally think that some of Gene's best work is the stuff he's done in wash for the black-and-white magazines."

The quality of Colan's work is something that John David Warner, editor of Marvel's black-and-white magazines, is fully in agreement with. "I've got this BLADE story on file that Gene did himself — and in wash — that's just beautiful, but it sits in the drawer because I don't have a book to put it in. It's really a shame, too, because Gene's stuff *is* so hard to ink, and this wash-job really shows the depth of his work. One of the reasons that TOMB OF DRACULA always looks so great is that Tom Palmer is so successful at translating Gene's pencils to inks with the use of zip-a-tone and a fine pen line."

Just what kind of training goes into the making of such an artist? We contacted Gene at his New Jersey studio for the answer.

"Well, my influences were the usual ones: Alex Raymond, Milt Caniff, and Noel Sickles ... and, of course, Hal Foster. But I got most of my practical training thanks to the late Syd Shores. Syd had a studio, and we turned out work for the old Timely/Atlas line."

It was for that precursor of the present-day Marvel Comics line that much of Gene's early work was produced, although he also turned out work for such companies as Fiction House, Ziff-Davis, Ace, National, and Quality. There was even a story for the late EC comics line. And the work Gene did ran the gamut of everything from science fiction to westerns, from war stories to weird monster stories. Yes, and even to humor and romance comics.

"I always enjoyed the romance stories," says Gene. "They were simple stories — and, sure, there was a lot of formula in most of them — but they were fun to do. For the most part, though, I've always liked the adventure strip. Give me something with a little action to it, maybe even with a little bit of the old mystery or supernatural flavor to it ... like DRACULA."

And certainly, it is his work on TOMB OF DRACULA and on DOCTOR STRANGE for which Gene is most widely known. So, with a background that includes both slam-bang acrobatic super-heroes and the Lord of Vampires — with a reputation for turning out art that has at times been described as moody, brooding, and hauntingly realistic — isn't it just the slightest bit odd for Gene Colan to be delineating the adventures of a cigar-chomping duck?

Perhaps.

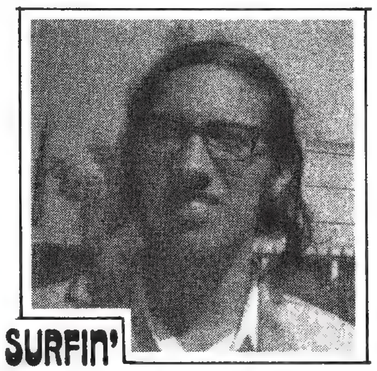
"Oh, but I love drawing HOWARD!" exclaims Gene, his normally soft voice becoming insistent. "It's really a kind of off-beat comedy adventure, if you get what I mean. There's all the usual action and excitement of a super-hero strip, but with this underlying air of comic relief that's always present."

Or as someone else has said, "I mean, he's a *duck*!"

And as far as Genial Gene Colan is concerned, he's going to keep drawing HTD until they cart him away.

And wouldn't it be something if such a peerless penciler finally got the praise he so richly deserves, thanks to an anthropomorphic fowl?

That would be *too* good to be true.



SURFIN' STEVE LEIALOHA

Night falls in the San Francisco Bay Area, and the fog settles in over the region like a blanket, as a lone figure bends over his drawing board. Carefully, he applies his ink to a series of penciled pages as the clock ticks on. And, while the so-called normal people toss about in their beds, the tall fellow at the board pauses between brush and pen, allows himself to stretch and yawn once or twice, and then — chuckling a bit, perhaps — returns to his work. It is midnight in San Francisco, and Steve Leialoha is inking the Duck.

So how does a tall, bearded young man of some twenty-four summers wind up inking the adventures of America's most fantastic fowl? After all, it's not the most usual form of employment. One might expect him to be occupied by something more prosaic — like, say, playing bass in a rock band. Well, as a matter of fact, although he *does* play bass in a rock band, Steve Leialoha is also possessed by that special sense of wonder that typifies the strange breed of humanity known as comic book people. And, as is the case with many of us folk, Steve's involvement with the medium stems from an old childhood attachment.

As a matter of record, the art of Steve Leialoha first popped into comics-related print back in the mid-sixties in the pages of a couple of New York-based fanzines, *Super-Adventures* and *Stories of Suspense*. (For those of you interested in the "Isn't it a small world?" school of coincidences, both of those fanzines were produced by Marvelous Marv Wolfman.) After several issues of illustrating the escapades of such characters as "Janah the Space Viking," Steve drifted away from the world of fanzines, although he continued to enjoy comics and polish his art. "My influences in those days were mainly Gil Kane and Carmine Infantino," says Steve, "especially when they were inked by Murphy Anderson. Of course, there have been a lot of other influences since then, but those three were the first big ones."

After that early splash in the fanzines, the name of Leialoha was not to be heard of again in connection with comics for nearly a decade — not until the mid-seventies. It was then that the loose grouping of people known as the Marvel Bullpen West came into being. In actuality, Marvel West was just an odd conglomeration of writers, artists, letterers, and other such types who had grown tired of the Big Apple and packed it all off to the somewhat calmer climes of the Bay Area. Of that group, it was Alan Weiss who first encountered Leialoha.

"I had heard about all of these comic book people moving into the area," Steve explains, "and then one day I ran into Al and showed him some of the samples I was working up. He liked 'em, and he told me that I ought to go up and see Jim Starlin."

Starlin, as it happened, was in the market for a good, California-based inker to help in the production of his WARLOCK book. "It's funny! Two strips I'd always wanted to work on were WARLOCK and DOCTOR STRANGE, and there I was, working with Jim on WARLOCK!"

One thing led to another, and when the first issue of HOWARD THE DUCK came out, it was Steve Leialoha who was holding down the honors as embellisher. So what's it like to put the finishing touches on the far-flung adventures of a misplaced duck? "Oh, it has its moments," says Steve. "I really enjoy working with Gene Colan. I've heard other people say that he's a hard artist to ink, but I find his stuff pretty easy, myself. I guess it's all a matter of your point-of-view. His pencils have a lot of gray tones, as opposed to bold line-work, and I like that. As an inker, it gives me a lot of leeway in what I do, and I don't feel so restricted in adding my own touches to it."

As for the future? Well, Steve has some new works planned for Mike Friedrich's STAR*REACH magazine and, of course, there's always music and the band — but what about Leialoha at Marvel?

"Well, it looks like I'll be working with Gene and Marv soon on DOCTOR STRANGE. And ... well, I've always wanted to ink some of Gil Kane's pencils. Now that I'm working for Marvel, I'd like to do that ... even if it's just a cover."

Meanwhile, there's the Duck ... and the fog. And the normal people have no idea just what they're missing!

you plan to diversity in your writing, moving into other fields?

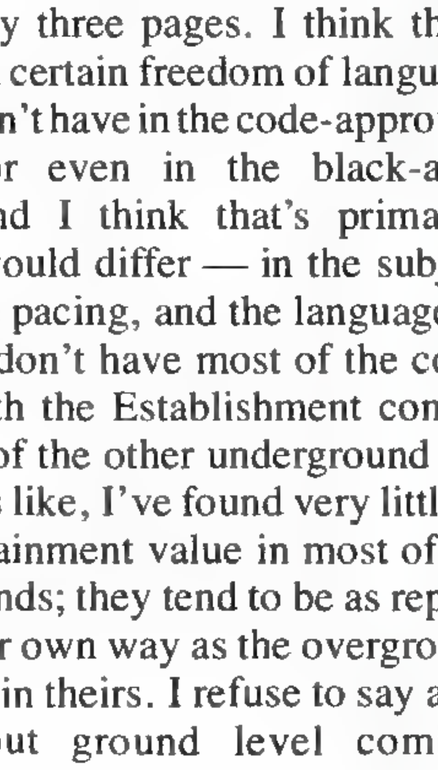
STEVE: I already am, yeah. You know about the book I'm trying to put together on comics. There's a novel I want to write about the comic book business. A collection of short stories I'm working on. I'd like to get back to film, radio and some of the other things. There's the project that Mary, Jim Salicrup and I are working on, *Dione Belmont*. There's another really silly project that I have in mind for anybody who wants it, called *Meatball*. I'm setting up my own production company, although I don't exactly know what Steve Gerber Productions is going to be, yet. We produced the Duck button. I'm thinking about doing an underground.

FOOM: How will your underground work differ from your overground?

STEVE: I was going to say the plots might be more complex, but I'm not really sure about that when I remember that ten-issue *DEFENDERS* "bozos" epic. I don't know if they could get much more complicated than that. The pacing of the stories would probably differ a lot, because I wouldn't have to have a fight scene every three pages. I think there would be a certain freedom of language that you don't have in the code-approved comics, or even in the black-and-whites, and I think that's primarily where it would differ — in the subject matter, the pacing, and the language — because I don't have most of the complaints with the Establishment comics that most of the other underground artists do. It's like, I've found very little of real entertainment value in most of the undergrounds; they tend to be as repetitive in their own way as the overground comics do in theirs. I refuse to say anything about ground level comics. (Laughter.)

FOOM: So, tell me, Steve — what do you do in your spare time?

STEVE: My what? (Laughter.) There's no such thing.



Official Howard for President campaign button
by Bernie Wrightson

Howard the Duck #2, page 6 unaltered panel 3 art
(see page 64 for the final version with the art change required by the Comics Code Authority)

I'M NO CRITIC -- BUT PERSONALLY I THINK HE TRIES TOO HARD--HITS YA OVER THE HEAD WITH THE MESSAGE.
SO HE'S GOT A SOCIAL CONSCIENCE. YOU COULD USE A LITTLE OF THAT YOURSELF.

Official Howard the Duck 1976 presidential campaign portrait
by Bernie Wrightson

At the peak of the presidential race, *Marvel Treasury Edition* #12 (released October 5, 1976) made the final push for Howard's candidacy with "Know Your Candidate," an interview "conducted" by Steve Gerber, and "Unsolicited Testimonials" from Marvel's heroes, Stan Lee and *you*, dear Marvelite. Get down, America!

KNOW YOUR CANDIDATE!

A Cand d Interview with HOWARD THE DUCK by World Renowned Author and Part Time Button Magnate STEVE GERBER

STEVE GERBER: Once they've read this *Marvel Treasury Edition,* Howard, your fans and potential supporters should be fairly conversant with the history of your exploits. But today's voter is interested in more than a candidate's record.

HOWARD THE DUCK: Yeah. I know. They want all the intimate details of their personal lives. Whaddaya think — I've never read *Celebrity* magazine?!

SG: Skip the sarcasm, okay? And let's take this opportunity to let the voters get to know you as a person.

HTD: But I'm *not* a person, you yo-yo! I'm a duck!

SG: Whatever. Let's start with a simple question that should lend some insight into your personal — into the real you, that is. Why do you want to be president?

HTD: All the standard reasons. Your power. Your fame. Your niche in history. But mostly it's the salary. See, I'm currently unemployed, and 200 grand a year would fill the void nicely. Especially with four years' free rent tossed in to sweeten the deal.

SG: Practical, material considerations are your primary motivation, then. Would that same orientation be reflected in a Duck Administraton as well? Would you govern the country pragmatically?

HTD: Shucks, no. Deep down, I'm a cockeyed optimist. I took a course in motel management once. I'd run the country that way — like everybody's name was Smith.

SG: Could you be more specific?

HTD: No.

SG: Oh. Well then, let's talk about your qualifications for office. What's the extent of your political experience?

HTD: I used to work in a loan company branch office.

SG: Apparently that's meant to imply something, but —

HTD: I sold used cars for a while, too.

SG: That's quite an impressive resume, but we seem to be digressing ...

HTD: I distinctly heard you say you wanted to probe the *real me.* Well, that's it. Basically, I'm just as dull as the next nine-to-five automaton. You gotta remember, back where I come from, bein' a duck is nothin' exceptional.

SG: Yes, but even so, I can't picture a fellow with your sardonic bent plodding away at a workaday job.

HTD: How true, how true. I never kept one job more than three an' a half weeks. Which is another advantage of the presidency. They can only fire ya for high crimes an' misdemeanors. That stuff, I don't pull. I just mouth off a lot.

SG: Maybe we'd better steer this discussion toward your positions on the issues.

HTD: Yeah. Let's.

SG: You've expressed dismay at certain trends in popular culture, particularly the glorification of the rogue and the glamorization of violence. Are we to infer from this that you'd advocate some form of media censorship?

HTD: You gotta be kidding! Ya don't eliminate garbage by turnin' it into a black market commodity, an' ya don't elevate tastes by gagging writers an' artists. Look, there's nothin' wrong with makin' heroes outta non-conformists. I'll even admit to a rebellious streak myself. It's just — at the risk o' soundin' pompous — what seems to distinguish *today's* anti-hero from yesteryear's is the former's willingness to callously exploit other people to achieve his own independence from the system. It's the difference between a poet an' a vulture, basically.

SG: That's pretty heavy.

HTD: Yeah. Nearly collapsed under its own weight, didn't it?

SG: I mean, do you think the American public is ready for that degree of subtle reasoning from its president?

HTD: They better be. If you turkeys can't even think *that* deep, this nation's *had* it!

SG: We seem to be gingerly approaching the core of your political philosophy, Howard. You want human beings to *think.*

HTD: Yeah, well, I know it's askin' a *lot* from a hairless ape, but ...!

SG: Realistically, how do you assess your chances for winning the November election?

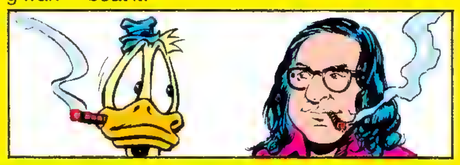
HTD: Chance, schmance. I'm no gambler. Barring unforeseen factors, it's in the bag.

SG: And should some such factor arise ...?

HTD: I wish ya luck unloadin' those "Get Down America" buttons, pal.

SG: Thank you, Howard the Duck.

HTD: You're welcome, Steve the Teddybear. Now g'wan — beat it!



UNSOLICITED TESTIMONIALS

A glittering gallery of Marvel Super-stars explain in their own words why HOWARD THE DUCK gets their votes in 1976

CAPTAIN AMERICA: "Oh, sure, he's honest. He's canny. He's in the best tradition of rugged American individualism. But the *real* reason I'm voting for HTD is — *not once in his entire campaign has he stooped to invoking the Bicentennial!* I don't know about you folks, but I'm sick of hearing about it, and I appreciate Howard's thoughtfulness."

IRON MAN: "He's got a heart of gold and nerves of steel. And he promised Tony Stark that my armor would be tax-deductible as a business expense if he's elected."

BENJAMIN J. GRIMM (a.k.a. The THING): "He smokes a mean stogie. That's good enuff fer me! Go clobber 'em, feather-puss!"

THE MIGHTY THOR: "When thou lookest upon yon slate of candidates, then wilt thou see, with eyes moistened by sorrow, that thou truly hast no choice."

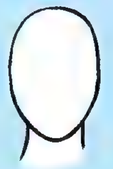
THE INCREDIBLE HULK: "Hulk likes little duck! Duck is Hulk's friend! Vote for duck or Hulk will smash your face!"

DR. STEPHEN STRANGE: "If politics be 'the art of the possible,' then praise the Vishanti we have a candidate who has seen the worlds within worlds and knows for certain — *all things* are possible."

DAREDEVIL: "My superhearing has been attuned to his heartbeat from the start of the campaign, so I can guarantee — he'll never lie to you."

LUKE CAGE, POWER MAN: "Listen, I work for a livin', see, so I'm runnin' with the candidate who's gonna help feather my nest—Mr. H.T. Duck, not some jive turkey, you dig?"

STAN LEE: "I graciously bowed out of the presidential race this year — so besides Howard, who's left, true believer?"



YOU, MARVELITE: It's not enough that Howard has the support of these far-famed fighters for truth and justice, folks. He needs *your* backing, too! That's why we're making this last, unbearably pathetic appeal not only for your vote — but your hard-earned bread as well!

The *OFFICIAL HTD FOR PRESIDENT CAMPAIGN BUTTON,* pictured atop this page is still available. It's printed in full color, measures two (count 'em, two!) inches in diameter, and comes complete with its own pin! What's more, it looks even better decorating your body that it does on this page — that's a campaign promise!

To order yours, rush $1.00, plus 25¢ for postage and handling per button, to Howard's Campaign Manager:

STEVE GERBER
c/o Mad Genius Associates
850 Seventh Ave., Rm. 806
New York, NY 10019

We should also mention that the *OFFICIAL HTD CAMPAIGN PORTRAIT,* an 8 x 10 sepia-tone poster printed on heavy stock and suitable for framing, is available from the same hungry writer at the same address for the same price: $1.00, plus 25¢ postage and handling per portrait. And it's a beauty.

Which leaves but one thing left to be said:

GET DOWN, AMERICA!

Vote HOWARD THE DUCK in 1976!

* * *

HTD PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN UPDATE FINAL

News Flash: DUCK FEVER SWEEPS NATION; MASS IMMUNIZATION PROGRAM PROPOSED. Washington, D.C. (UDI)---Fench Q.T. Hargrove, vice-deputy assistant undersecretary of the Food and Drug Administration, announced today that the FDA would undertake a nationwide innoculation program to halt the epidemic spread of "duck fever." The malady, also known as "Howard's Disease," infests the brains of voters and painfully heightens their sensitivity to absurd political rhetoric. As a result, the spokesman said, "Voters are turning away from Jimmy Carter and President Ford in droves. The disease represents a clear and present danger to the complacent existence of our two-party system." The FDA suspects the disease may be of extraterrestrial origin. Federal microbe hunters are furiously seeking to isolate the virus and destroy it utterly by November 2nd.

News Flash: DUCK PADDLES AHEAD IN STRAW VOTE. New York (UDI)---Although Ford and Carter have made significant gains since the start of the campaign—almost all registered Democrats now favor Carter and three of the four registered Republicans have pledged their support to Ford—HTD has retained his hold on the independent vote. The Waddle Poll therefore expects Howard to carry 49 states; the exception is Wyoming, where there are so few people that chickens are allowed to vote. "Only half the population *eligible* to vote bothers to *register,"* the Waddle report read, "and the established parties comprise barely half of those registered. So we have a situation where 25% of the electorate selects the candidates between which the full 100% are expected compliantly to choose. Voters now seem to comprehend that this is ridiculous and are flocking to Howard as an alternative to a bizarre form of oligarchy."

The Waddle Organization cautions, however, that its poll was conducted before the Bathtub Scandal came to public attention. How will this incident affect the Duck's chances? The report soberly concludes: "Gee whiz, anything could happen now! Golly!!"

Noose Flash: DUCK CAMPAIGN TREASURY AT ALL-TIME LOW; CAMPAIGN MANAGER EMBEZZLING FUNDS, CLAIMS HTD. New York (UDI)---Howard the Duck today accused his campaign manager, Stephen R. Gerber, of embezzling funds from the sale of Official HTD FOR PRESIDENT BUTTONS and CAMPAIGN PORTRAITS of the Duck. Gerber claims that the buttons—resplendent in four-colors, two inches in diameter, and redolent of printer's ink—were his property; as were the 8x10 sepia-tone portraits, produced in association with Magic Mountain Books. When pressed to substantiate this claim, Gerber angrily sputtered, "Besides, that villa on the Riviera was too big a bargain to pass up." Asked if these campaign items were still available to the general public, Gerber seemed to relax somewhat and replied, "You betcha! And they're just $1.00 each, plus 25¢ postage and handling per item from *me*:

STEVE GERBER
c/o Mad Genius Associates
850 Seventh Avenue, Room 806
New York, NY 10019

But hurry if ya want 'em before election day. And supplies are running out fast!"

Speaking of running out, this reporter later learned that Gerber had purchased either a one-way ticket to the south of France or a Greyhound See-America pass from a scalper outside the McCartney and Wings concert at Madison Square Garden last summer. Draw your own inevitable conclusions.

GET DOWN, AMERICA!
Vote HOWARD THE DUCK in '76!

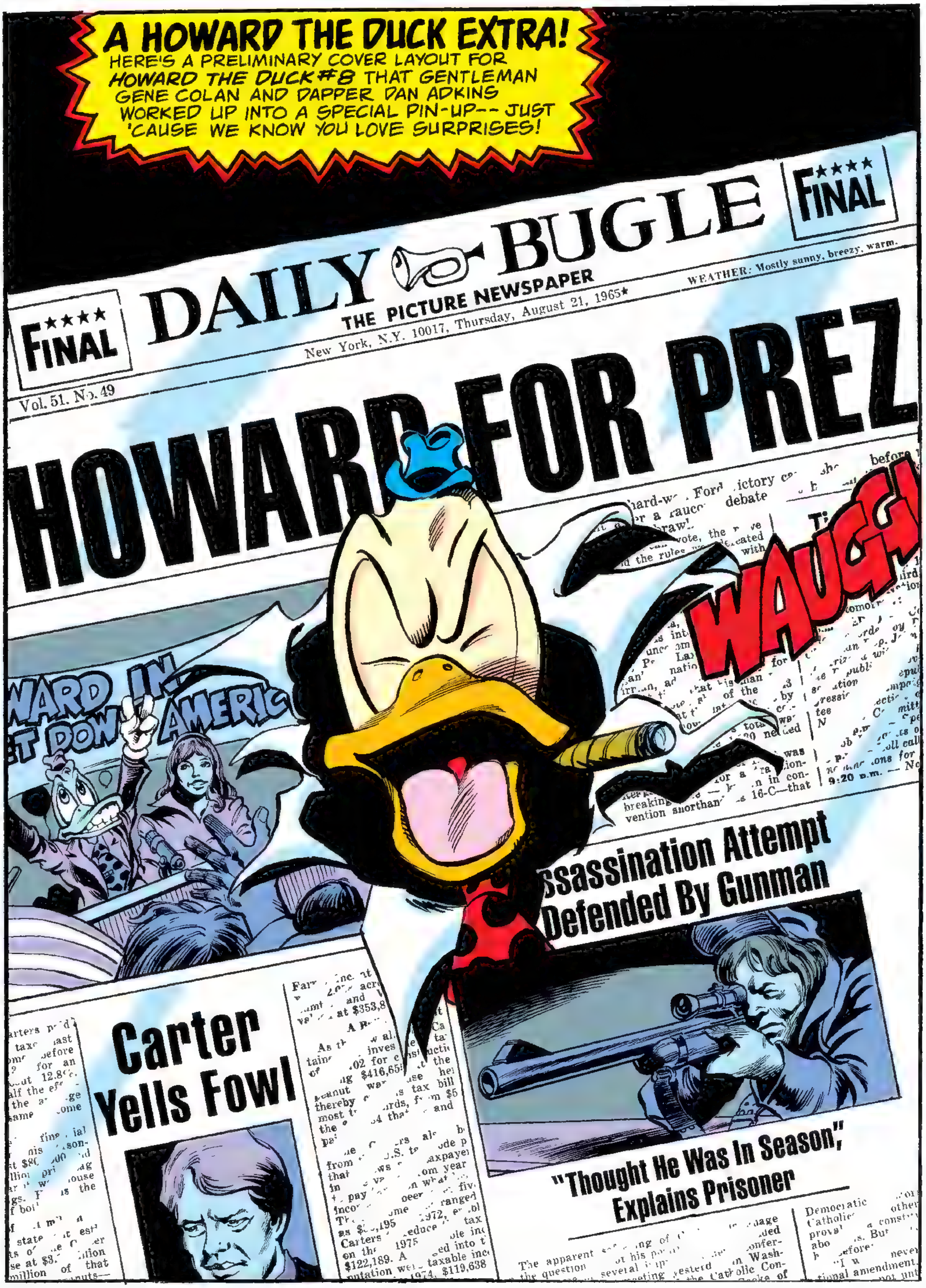
Left: Howard the Duck Presidential Campaign Update Final from *Howard the Duck* #8, released October 26, 1976, just one short week before the election.

Right: Campaign Roundup from *Howard the Duck* #9, released November 23, 1976, broke the hard news that a talking duck was not elected president of the United States. Softening the blow, a Howard the Duck T-shirt!

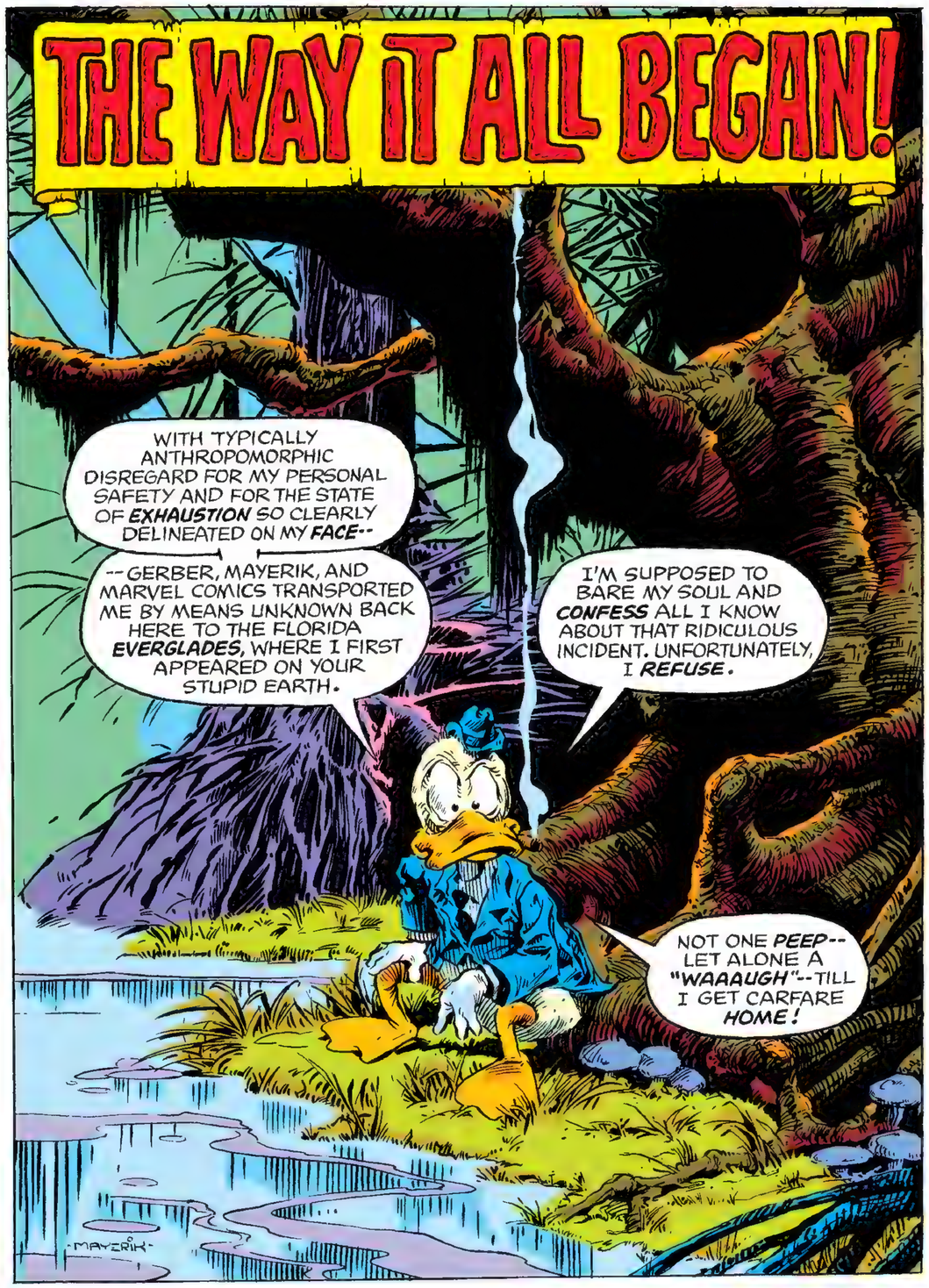
HTD PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN ROUNDUP: It was a good fight, ma. Unfortunately, they creamed us. But it was a battle to remember...which is why we're hard at work even now preparing a special sort of *souvenir* of the campaign. You'll be hearing more about it in the next month or so. Meanwhile, we still have a few OFFICIAL HTD FOR PRESIDENT BUTTONS left and we figured we'd offer 'em up once more, just as a sentimental gesture, before they become overpriced collector's items. You can still get yours for just $1.00, plus 25¢ per button for postage and handling. Likewise, the HTD CAMPAIGN PORTRAIT is still available. Same price. Same address: *STEVE GERBER, c/o Mad Genius Associates, 850 Seventh Avenue, Room 806, New York, NY 10019.* And that's all the pep talk for this issue. Frankly, we're poor losers and since we can't say anything nice about the other candidates, we'll just clam up. Nuts to you. Grumble, grumble, gnash, gnash, waaaugh.

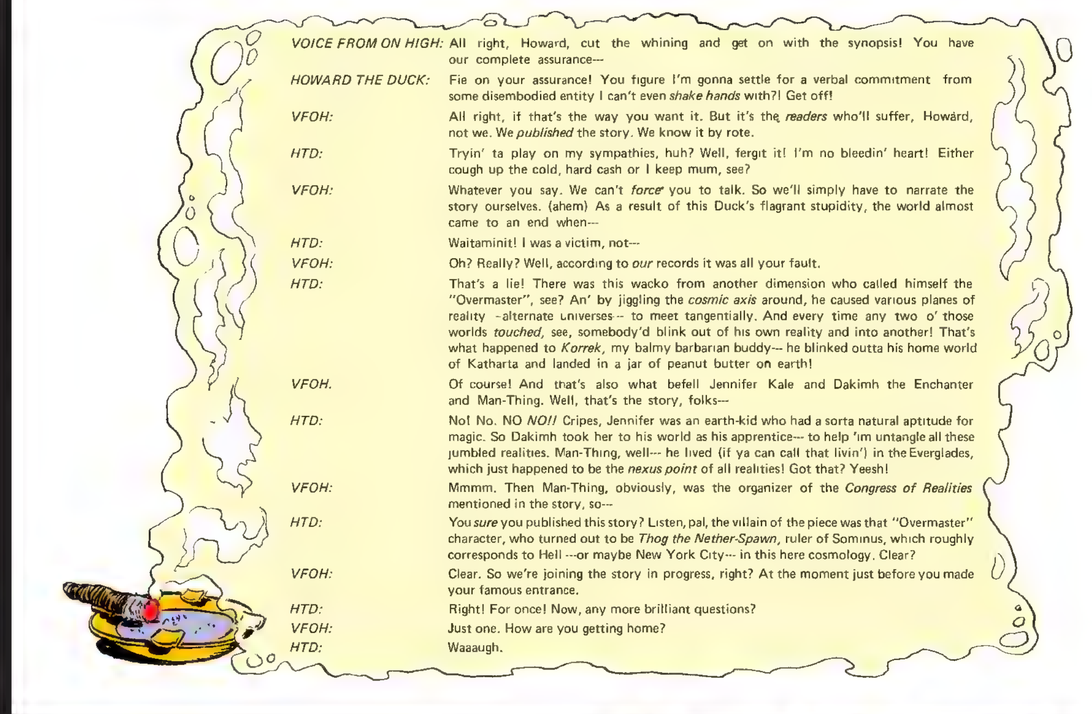
WEAR HOWARD!
AT LAST YOUR OFFICIAL DUCK SHIRT!
HOWARD THE DUCK
YOURS FOR ONLY A PALTRY $3.98 IN KID SIZE AND $4.49 IN ADULT SIZE PLUS 50¢ POSTAGE & HANDLING FOR EACH SHIRT!
SEND TO:
SUPERHERO MERCHANDISE
P.O. BOX 777
DOVER, NEW JERSEY 07801
DEPT. HD
KIDS $4.48
ADULTS $4.99
SEND ME ___ SHIRTS SIZE BS (9-10) BM (10-16) BL (14-16) S·M·L·XL
NAME
ADDRESS
CITY
STATE ZIP
ALLOW 4 WEEKS FOR DELIVERY. US FUNDS
CANADIAN ORDERS ADD 50¢

Howard the Duck #8, unused cover (as presented in *Marvel Treasury Edition* #12)
by Gene Colan & Steve Leialoha


A HOWARD THE DUCK EXTRA!
HERE'S A PRELIMINARY COVER LAYOUT FOR HOWARD THE DUCK #8 THAT GENTLEMAN GENE COLAN AND DAPPER DAN ADKINS WORKED UP INTO A SPECIAL PIN-UP-- JUST 'CAUSE WE KNOW YOU LOVE SURPRISES!
FINAL
DAILY BUGLE
THE PICTURE NEWSPAPER
New York, N.Y. 10017, Thursday, August 21, 1965
WEATHER: Mostly sunny, breezy, warm.
FINAL
Vol. 51. No. 49
HOWARD FOR PREZ
WAUGH!
Assassination Attempt Defended By Gunman
"Thought He Was In Season," Explains Prisoner
Carter Yells Fowl

Marvel Treasury Edition #12 reprinted Howard's debut from *Fear* #19 and *Man-Thing* #1. A new title page, "The Way It All Began!" by Steve Gerber & Val Mayerik introduced the stories, while in a recap of the events prior to Howard's arrival in our dimension, Gerber (as Voice from on High) and Howard argued over the details.


THE WAY IT ALL BEGAN!
WITH TYPICALLY ANTHROPOMORPHIC DISREGARD FOR MY PERSONAL SAFETY AND FOR THE STATE OF EXHAUSTION SO CLEARLY DELINEATED ON MY FACE--
--GERBER, MAYERIK, AND MARVEL COMICS TRANSPORTED ME BY MEANS UNKNOWN BACK HERE TO THE FLORIDA EVERGLADES, WHERE I FIRST APPEARED ON YOUR STUPID EARTH.
I'M SUPPOSED TO BARE MY SOUL AND CONFESS ALL I KNOW ABOUT THAT RIDICULOUS INCIDENT. UNFORTUNATELY, I REFUSE.
NOT ONE PEEP-- LET ALONE A "WAAAUGH"--TILL I GET CARFARE HOME!
MAYERIK


VOICE FROM ON HIGH: All right, Howard, cut the whining and get on with the synopsis! You have our complete assurance---
HOWARD THE DUCK: Fie on your assurance! You figure I'm gonna settle for a verbal commitment from some disembodied entity I can't even *shake hands* with?! Get off!
VFOH: All right, if that's the way you want it. But it's the *readers* who'll suffer, Howard, not we. We *published* the story. We know it by rote.
HTD: Tryin' ta play on my sympathies, huh? Well, fergit it! I'm no bleedin' heart! Either cough up the cold, hard cash or I keep mum, see?
VFOH: Whatever you say. We can't *force* you to talk. So we'll simply have to narrate the story ourselves. (ahem) As a result of this Duck's flagrant stupidity, the world almost came to an end when---
HTD: Waitaminit! I was a victim, not---
VFOH: Oh? Really? Well, according to *our* records it was all your fault.
HTD: That's a lie! There was this wacko from another dimension who called himself the "Overmaster", see? An' by jiggling the *cosmic axis* around, he caused various planes of reality -alternate universes-- to meet tangentially. And every time any two o' those worlds *touched*, see, somebody'd blink out of his own reality and into another! That's what happened to *Korrek*, my balmy barbarian buddy--- he blinked outta his home world of Katharta and landed in a jar of peanut butter on earth!
VFOH. Of course! And that's also what befell Jennifer Kale and Dakimh the Enchanter and Man-Thing. Well, that's the story, folks---
HTD: No! No. NO *NO!!* Cripes, Jennifer was an earth-kid who had a sorta natural aptitude for magic. So Dakimh took her to his world as his apprentice--- to help 'im untangle all these jumbled realities. Man-Thing, well--- he lived (if ya can call that livin') in the Everglades, which just happened to be the *nexus point* of all realities! Got that? Yeesh!
VFOH: Mmmm. Then Man-Thing, obviously, was the organizer of the *Congress of Realities* mentioned in the story, so---
HTD: You *sure* you published this story? Listen, pal, the villain of the piece was that "Overmaster" character, who turned out to be *Thog the Nether-Spawn*, ruler of Sominus, which roughly corresponds to Hell ---or maybe New York City--- in this here cosmology. Clear?
VFOH: Clear. So we're joining the story in progress, right? At the moment just before you made your famous entrance.
HTD: Right! For once! Now, any more brilliant questions?
VFOH: Just one. How are you getting home?
HTD: Waaaugh.

MARVEL TREASURY EDITION™
12 1976
SPECIAL COLLECTOR'S ISSUE!!
$1.50
HOWARD THE DUCK
GUEST-STARRING THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN!
$1.50 02930
IN A RIOTOUS RERUN OF THE WORLD'S MOST HUNTED COMIC: HOWARD THE DUCK #1
FIRST TIME EVER! EVERYONE'S FAVORITE FOWL JOINS THE DEFENDERS! AN ALL-NEW 27 PAGE EPIC EXTRAVAGANZA!
HOWARD THE DUCK
MARVEL TREASURY EDITION

This production photostat shows an early version of the *Marvel Treasury Edition* #12 cover, including a Spider-Man cameo and a different configuration of the characters, explaining why the figures on the back cover's reverse shot don't match the final front cover art.

Top: *Crazy Magazine* house ad, featuring Howard the Duck, from November 1976 titles. **Bottom:** *Marvel Treasury Edition* #12 house ad from January 1977 titles.

THIS DUCK IS CRAZY!
WHY? 'CAUSE HE'S GETTING A KICK OUTTA THE FURSHLUGINER FUNNIES IN EACH AND EVERY UNMENTIONABLE ISSUE OF
CRAZY
THE MAGAZINE THAT DARES TO BE DUMB! YOU CAN BE AS ERUDITE AS HOWARD! GET WITH CRAZY!
AMERICA'S THIRD BEST-SELLING HUMOR MAGAZINE!
IF YOU MISSED THIS 00!
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
TRAPPED IN A WORLD HE NEVER MADE!
HOWARD THE DUCK
BECAUSE YOU DEMANDED IT- THE FABULOUS FIRST ISSUE OF MARVEL'S MOST SENSATIONAL NEW SUPER-STAR!
LET NOTHING PREVENT YOU FROM PURCHASING THE HOWARD THE DUCK TREASURY EDITION!
TREASURY EDITION
SPECIAL COLLECTOR'S ISSUE
12 1976
$1.50 02930
HOWARD THE DUCK
FEATURING A RIOTOUS REPRINTING OF THE WORLD'S MOST WANTED COMIC HOWARD THE DUCK #1!!
FEATURING:
THE ALREADY LEGENDARY HOWARD THE DUCK #1 REPRODUCED IN ITS ENTIRETY! AN ALL-NEW TWENTY-SEVEN PAGE EPIC STARRING HOWARD, BEV, AND THE DYNAMIC DEFENDERS VERSUS DOCTOR ANGST AND HIS MERRY MISANTHROPES!
FIRST TIME EVER!
EVERYONE'S FAVORIT FOWL JOINS THE DEFENDER
AN ALL-NEW 17 PAGE EXTRAVAGANZA!
PLUS 00
THE HELL COW!
THE SPACE TURNIP!
THE MAN-THING!
AND MORE!

Spider-Man: Strange Adventures TPB (1996) cover
by Steve Lightle

Reprinting *Howard the Duck* #1, *The Amazing Spider-Man* #100-102 & *Annual* #15 and *Marvel Fanfare* #1-2

Howard the Duck Omnibus (2008) HC cover pencil art
by Frank Brunner

Reprinting *Fear* #19, *Man-Thing* #1, *Giant-Size Man-Thing* #4-5,

Howard the Duck Omnibus (2008) HC cover
by Frank Brunner with colors by Paul Mounts

Howard the Duck #1-33 & *Annual* #1, *Marvel Treasury Edition* #12 and *Marvel Team-Up* #96

Howard the Duck Omnibus (2008) HC variant cover
by Marko Djurdjevic

The Hero Initiative released this Howard the Duck & Beverly Switzler lithograph in 2008 to honor Steve Gerber. Art by Frank Cho with colors by Jason Keith.

GETTING DOWN AGAIN

BY STEVE GERBER

FROM HOWARD THE DUCK OMNIBUS *(2008)*

He was in a Pretenders song ("Precious") and got coverage in the *Washington Post*, the *New York Times*, and *New York Magazine*. For a year or so, he had his own newspaper comic strip. In 1976, he ran for president, and ten years later he became the first Marvel Comics character to star in a major motion picture. Between his presidential bid and the catastrophe of his big screen debut, he was the bone of contention in a bitter and much-publicized lawsuit that helped reshape the way business was conducted between comic book creators and their publishers.

He was more than that to me, though. He was my voice—my alter ego, really. He was the conduit for my political views, my wacky sociological theories, my outrage at society's ills and my all-too-frequent confusion about the intricacies of personal relationships.

In every respect—even his name, which he owes to one Howard Tockman, my best friend in high school—Howard the Duck was that rarest of birds among mainstream comics: a personal creation.

Today, of course, it's common, even expected, for writers and artists to offer their individual "takes" on a character. It's not even unusual for multiple versions of a single character to be published concurrently. So what's the big deal anymore about a personal duck?

Howard was precisely the opposite of a character that could be freely reinterpreted by other writers. I used to joke that the only way anyone else could write him authentically would be to live inside my mind for awhile, and that that was too much to ask of any rational human being. Others could try to put their words and worldviews into the duck's beak, but the result would come off not as a re-imagining of the character but more like a stand-up comic's impersonation—Rich Little "doing" Johnny Carson.

Okay, fine, but why does that matter? We're still talking about a damn cartoon duck.

Except we're not. We're talking about the importance—in this case, I'd go so far as to say "necessity"—of an individual creative voice and an individual point of view in an entertainment universe consisting largely of Ultra-Mega-Mass-Pacification-Product.

Howard railed against kung fu revenge films at the height of their popularity. Howard made merciless fun of bogus cult leaders and their doe-eyed followers. Howard ridiculed the bodice-ripping romance novel fad when publishers everywhere were attempting to imitate it. In America's Bicentennial Year, Howard took the political parties, their cookie-cutter candidates, the media and willfully ignorant voters to task for the way our leaders were chosen.

As a minority of one sentient waterfowl in a world of "hairless apes"—his term for humans—he challenged intolerance on every front, merrily upending hypocritical crusaders for "decency," anti-gay bigots, racial (and species) prejudice, and opposing the great lumbering force that is conformity itself. He made mockery of the corporate mindset; battled "Konglomerate," the rampaging 800-pound big business gorilla, and made one of the earliest pop culture statements against movie marketing run amok.

And if you think any of that is the least bit remarkable, consider the following:

Marvel Comics knew this subversive literature was being published between the covers of one of their comic books and allowed it to happen.

Thirty-odd years later, I still can't quite explain that.

Maybe it was inevitable that "creative differences" and business issues would eventually bring an end to Howard's early glory days. The 1970s were waning, and the more conservative Reagan era was on the horizon. Publishers and readers alike became averse to experimentation, preferring more direct storylines with simpler motivations and unambiguous heroes and villains. It was a tough time in America for a duck, or anyone, with a mind of his own.

But I prefer not to dwell on those times. Far more important is the fact that the pages that comprise this volume exist, that they remain as relevant as ever, and that Marvel is willing to publish them yet again.

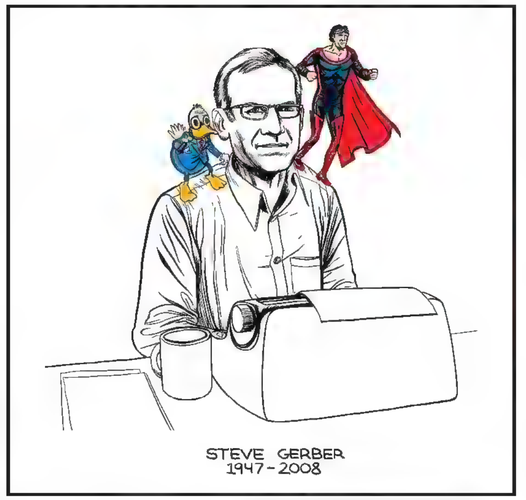
Some thanks are due to the other people responsible for the content of this Omnibus.

Former Editor in Chief Roy Thomas hired me to work at Marvel, assigned me the Man-Thing series in which Howard first appeared, and allowed me to steer it in whatever bizarre direction my imagination led. Roy also gave the green light to proceed with "Frog Death," the first Howard the Duck solo story.

Former Marvel publisher Stan Lee said, "Yes!" instantly when I proposed Howard the Duck as a standalone title.

Artists Val Mayerik, Frank Brunner, John Buscema, Sal Buscema, Carmine Infantino, Will Meugniot, Steve Leialoha, Klaus Janson, and, most especially, Gene Colan brought Howard's adventures to vibrant visual life

Mary Skrenes suggested the name "Beverly" for Howard's human companion, contributed creatively to any number of the stories in this book and weathered the turmoil that was my life for as long as she could. Mary and I still collaborate from time to time and, over the years, she has remained my closest friend. I dedicate this book to her.



Finally, I'd like to express my sincerest gratitude to the current management and staff of Marvel for bringing this volume to press and to collection editor Mark Beazley in particular for waiting patiently while I wrote this introduction from a hospital room in Las Vegas.

– Steve Gerber
Las Vegas, NV
January 16, 2008

Steve Gerber memorium by Farel Dalrymple from Omega the Unknown *#6 (May 2008).*

STEVE GERBER AND GENE COLAN ON *HOWARD THE DUCK*

INTERVIEW BY TOM FIELD

Tom Field: Steve, you'd know this better than Gene would. By the time he got onto *Howard the Duck* (issue #4), Frank Brunner had drawn a couple of issues; John Buscema had done one. Did you think Gene was settling in as the artist?

Steve Gerber: There's a very interesting story and, Gene, you're going to deny this story, OK? [laughs] Brunner had left—and actually he had only drawn one issue of the regular book by himself. The second was done in collaboration with Jim Starlin and a couple of other people. He was having deadline problems and had to get the book out quickly. Then he decided to leave for whatever reason—I still don't know—and John Buscema drew a fill-in issue. Then [the editors] were asking me, "Who would you like to draw this book?" To me, there was no other choice. Gene was *the* choice to draw this book, simply because he was the least likely choice ever to draw a funny-animal-looking character. His artwork was so real, and he drew people so well—to me there was no other choice among the other people working for Marvel at that time. He was *the* person I wanted to have do it if he were willing. Now, I don't know if you remember this, Gene, and, like I said, I think you're going to deny it. But John Verpoorten, who was Marvel's production manager at the time, called and asked you if you'd be willing to do the book. I was actually standing in John's office at the time. And you, Gene, thought you were being demoted to drawing funny-animal books!

Gene Colan: Really? Was that my comment? [laughs]

Gerber: Well, you'd never seen the book at that point, and John had to reassure you: "No, no, no…this book is really big with the fans! I think you're really going to enjoy it!"

Colan: Well, and I really did enjoy doing that book most of all because it was a combination of realism and animation—and I love funny stuff!

Gerber: My faith in you was completely justified the moment I saw the first stuff you did. I don't know that you were born to draw that book, but nobody else was, that's for sure! You did it better than anybody else could have possibly done it. And over a much longer period of time.

Colan: Thank you. I wish that we had stayed together on that or on something else. As a writer and an artist teaming together, it was the best thing that had come my way since I had been in comics. Really.

Field: Now, Gene, I've got to ask: Was that a tough adjustment for you? You'd been drawing Daredevil and Dracula and Doctor Strange. Then all of a sudden you were drawing the duck!

Colan: No, I liked it. I enjoyed it. I did have a question about what Disney was going to have to say about it! It was so much like Donald Duck, the way it was set up originally. I thought we would get flak on it, really. But the only change we had to make, I think, was his trousers. We had to put pants on Howard.

Gerber: That was after I left the book, actually.

Colan: I think we started out without the pants, just like Donald Duck would be. [Putting pants on Howard] was the way they could satisfy Disney and continue the series without having troubles with Disney.

Gerber: Personally, I don't think Howard looked anything like Donald Duck! [laughs]

Colan: No?

Gerber: I don't think Howard and Donald look anything alike! You look at the model sheets of the two characters, and they really don't. Howard's bill is shaped completely differently; Howard was yellow, not white; the two ducks wore completely different clothes; Howard's feet were much bigger… But what can you say?

Colan: Maybe that's how it turned out…

Gerber: No, no! I'm going back to even the very first issues that you did. Howard didn't *really* look like Donald Duck.

Colan: Are they still doing it?

Gerber: No, I don't think the character is being published now.

Field: Howard didn't read like Donald Duck either.

Gerber and Colan: No! [laughter]

Field: Steve, how did you write for Gene? Was it any different than how you wrote for any other artist you worked with?

Gerber: Only in the sense that I had read so much of Gene's work, seen so much of his work, that I had a really good sense of what kind of things he did best. Which mostly had to do with people and expressions—human things. I would write to play to those strengths all the time because nobody drew them any better.

Field: I remember a sequence in *Howard* where Winda Wester was showing off the various facial expressions she could make…

Gerber: [laughing] Yes! Gene, unlike most comic book artists, was actually capable of drawing more than three or four expressions on characters' faces!

Colan: Well, I have to say you really brought out the best in me; you truly did.

Gerber: It was there. I just used what I already knew you had.

Colan: Did you make up the Dr. Bong character?

Gerber: Yes. Marie Severin, who was on staff at Marvel at the time, designed the costume.

Colan: Y'see? Right there! Just the name, "Dr. Bong" got to me right away. And all the rest of Steve's ideas; they were really strokes of genius. I can't say enough. I just enjoyed it. It was a time of my life that has come and gone, and I wish the hell it were still here. The best time I had.

Gerber: In some ways, I have to say that's true for me, too.

Field: Steve, did you write full script for Gene, or did you give him plots?

Gerber: There may have been one or two full scripts in there just because of time constraints, but we generally did work plot-pencils-dialogue—the Marvel method, as it was called.

Field: How about for the sequences, say, in the "Quack Up" issues where there could be entire sequences of Howard arguing with himself—how did you plot those?

Gerber: For those sequences, I almost always included rough dialogue in the plot and tried to break the continuity down almost panel-for-panel. "Insert argument here" simply wouldn't have worked. The characters' gestures and expressions had to be in synch with the emotional and/or intellectual spikes and dips of the argumentation. The dialogue would, of course, be polished between the plotting stage and the final script.

Field: Did you find the challenge other writers sometimes found, that as Gene would pace a story he'd occasionally run out of pages before he ran out of story?

Gerber: Not with the duck, [laughs] but, yes, a couple of times with *Daredevil*! One time with *Daredevil* was interesting because Gene drew this really magnificent twelve-panel final page of a book, and it was one of the most cinematic pages I've ever seen done in comics. I actually used it as an illustration of cinematic storytelling in comics in an article I wrote for a

magazine called *Super 8 Filmmaker.*

Colan: This was on *Howard the Duck?*

Gerber: No, it was on *Daredevil.* By the time we did the duck, I think I'd actually learned better how to pace a story for you.

Colan: Actually, I think you gave me more to work with in the way of ideas, so that the pages worked out properly.

Gerber: That's probably true, but I also—because I knew you'd sometimes want to allot more room to a scene—I would sometimes just leave a page and say, "OK, just use this to catch up…"

Colan: Yes, yes…

Gerber: And it would work out that way. Kind of a crazy way of doing it, but it seemed to work out.

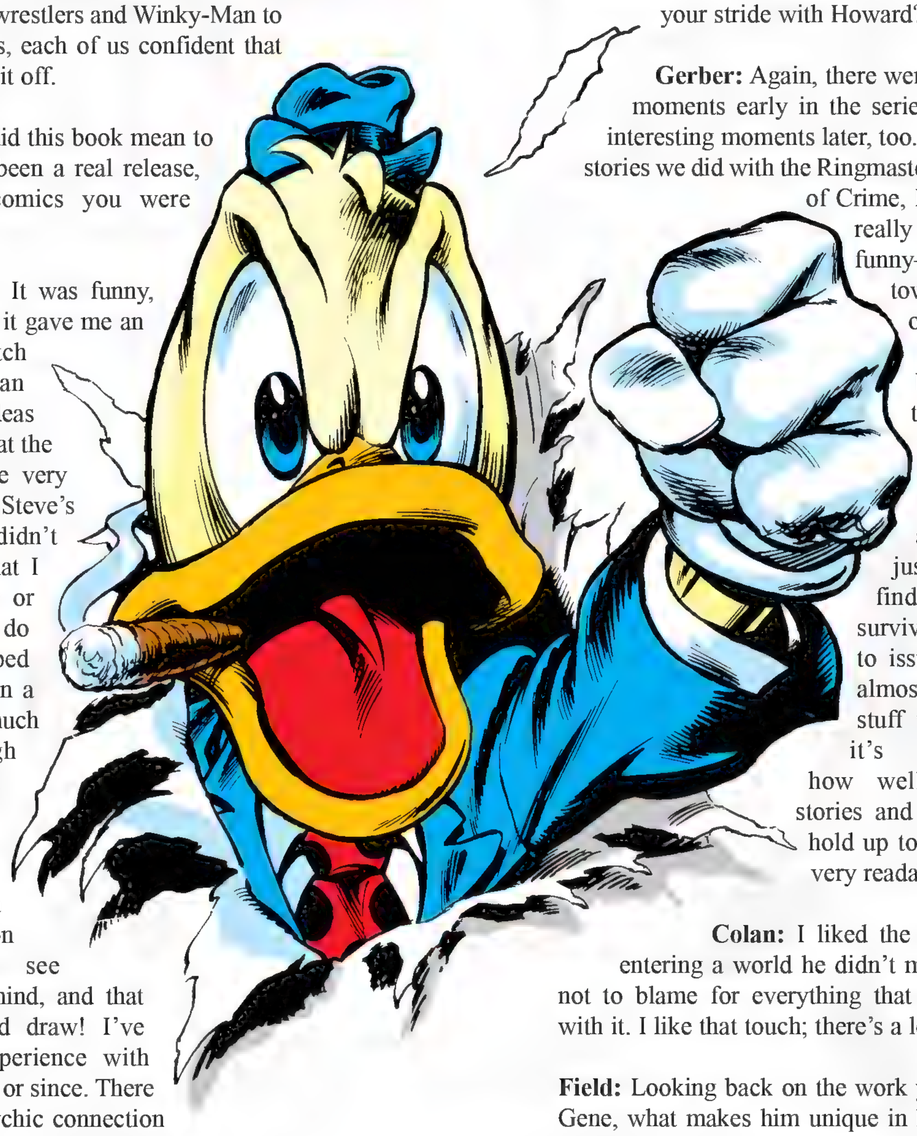
Colan: Generally, you put that page in just the right place when you wrote the script. I was left pretty much on my own when Stan would write for me, and although I liked working that way, the pacing often fell short.

Field: Steve, what would you say Gene brought to the Howard character in its development?

Gerber: I don't even know how to begin answering that question! Once we began working on the character together, once we were a few issues into the run, Gene really infused that character—and all the characters in that series—with his personality as much as mine. I mean, Howard developed a certain set of physical mannerisms that Gene entirely brought to the character. Beverly developed a particular look, as did Winda, Paul and all of the rest of them. Past the basic division of the words on the page and the lines in the drawings, I don't even know how to separate Gene's contribution from mine. There came a point in my collaboration with Gene when I was able to anticipate what he would draw from a given description, and I think I learned over time how much and what kind of descriptive guidance Gene needed from me in the plots. And Gene, I assume, likewise learned how to decode my descriptions and translate them into the kind of visuals I had in mind. After a while, I think we just came to trust each other. And as that trust grew, the visual concepts could get progressively crazier. We could go from, say, wrestlers and Winky-Man to Fifi and the Neezers, each of us confident that the other could pull it off.

Field: Gene, what did this book mean to you? It must have been a real release, given the other comics you were drawing?

Colan: Oh, it was. It was funny, very enjoyable, and it gave me an opportunity to stretch myself a bit as an artist. I think the ideas were so complete that the images came to me very quickly when I read Steve's work. And so I didn't have to wonder what I was going to draw or how I was going to do it. It was really mapped out so beautifully, in a sense without too much detail—just enough to get me going, and I ran with it.



Gerber: There really was almost a telepathic connection there. I would see something in my mind, and that is what you would draw! I've never had that experience with another artist before or since. There was just, like, a psychic connection between the two of us on that book.

Field: You're the only writer, Steve, about whom Gene has ever said he actually read the stories from beginning to end before starting to draw them!

Colan: Oh, I couldn't put them down! I didn't read them all—I'd read ahead just enough so that I could still be surprised. I tried not to read everything. But I would go into it a lot further than anything else I ever got.

Field: When did you feel like you really hit your stride with Howard?

Gerber: Again, there were interesting moments early in the series, and some interesting moments later, too. Some of the stories we did with the Ringmaster and Circus of Crime, I think, were really strange and funny—those were toward the end of the run. Nearer the beginning, there was the presidential campaign, Howard and Bev just trying to find money to survive from issue to issue… I liked almost all of the stuff we did, and it's remarkable how well both the stories and the artwork hold up today. It's still very readable.

Colan: I liked the idea of him entering a world he didn't make, so he's not to blame for everything that goes wrong with it. I like that touch; there's a lot behind it.

Field: Looking back on the work you did with Gene, what makes him unique in his approach to comic books?

Gerber: If you want to tell a story that is mostly about human beings, there are very few other artists you can turn to. Gene is an absolute master at telling stories about real people. Howard the Duck, paradoxically, was mainly about real people. [laughs] The fact that one of them was a duck was just incidental!

Colan: I thought that Howard was just the hub of everything. Beautifully written.

Field: Gene, you've worked with an awful lot of writers over the years, but whenever anyone asks you to name a favorite, Steve comes up first…

Colan: You bet!

Field: Why is that?

Colan: Imagination. He would write a story far different than any other writer would. He would just drag up these ideas that nobody else would think of, and put such life into the plots. You had to enjoy it! He was a natural, an absolute natural.

Field: Did you have a favorite character or sequence you enjoyed doing with Steve?

Colan: I liked doing Bong a lot.

[laughter]

Field: There's our banner quote from Gene: "I liked doing Bong…!"

Gerber: [laughing] I was going to say, he means *drawing* Dr. Bong, not doing *the* bong!

Tom Field is the author of Secrets in the Shadows: The Art and Life of Gene Colan *(TwoMorrows Publishing). This interview was conducted in preparation for that book.*

AT HOME WITH HOWARD THE DUCK

MARY SKRENES AND SAMANTHA GERBER REMEMBER STEVE GERBER

FROM HOWARD THE DUCK: THE COMPLETE COLLECTION VOL. 1 *(2015)*

I first met Steve Gerber at Marvel in 1973. A bunch of us relative newcomers would meet up, after five, for food and drinks. We were mostly writers and a few artists. Witticisms, zingers and laughter abounded. I found Steve to be exceptionally smart and hilarious in a group of guys that were all knowledgeable and funny.

Steve Gerber was a kind, generous, very intelligent, funny, talented, humble and self-effacing man. He truly liked women and was very comfortable talking to them. Steve was a voracious reader. He was obsessed with world history and current world news. He was a great believer in Marshall McLuhan. He was the first man I ever knew that I felt was my verbal equal. That made him very interesting. His writing was good too.

Before collaborating with me on *Omega the Unknown* in 1976, Gerber wrote Marvel style while I worked DC style, "full script." When he saw some of my writing, he got jazzed. He wanted to work that way too! I had already done a couple of full scripts for Marvel and nobody questioned it. Of course, the writer still had to place the word balloons, which didn't happen at DC. Steve loved writing that way, and Gene Colan really liked the scripts.

We were at some kind of burger bar with Frank Brunner discussing *Howard the Duck* #1. Steve had a rough plot for the first issue, and we were working out the details. Steve was describing Howard's climb up the credit card tower. As he got to the window, I said, "And inside is a scantily clad woman chained to the wall. Her name is Beverly Switzler. No, wait, I mean Swizzle!" Steve was adamant, shouting, "No, no, it's Switzler!" He loved the name for some reason. Thirty-three years later, after he died, I discovered that Switzler Hall was part of Gerber's college experience at the University of Missouri.

Although I contributed many ideas to the Howard books, and a lot of Beverly's dialogue, the book was all Steve's. It allowed him an unprecedented voice in a world of comics that seemed to be full of rehashed and regurgitated sameness. Everything in Howard's stories, protagonists, villains, even the background characters, stood for elements of the 1970s world that was rapidly moving toward the technobabble and security nightmare that we live in today.

Steve's daughter, Samantha, has her own special relationship with the Duck.

"I was three when Howard was born," Samantha said. "Six when he got his own book and ran for president. I didn't know the comic, at all, until I was much older. My dad bought me *ElfQuest* comics, which I loved. I do remember the cartoon shows he wrote, especially *Thundarr the Barbarian*. He gave me a copy of his Eclipse comic *Stewart the Rat*, but he told me I couldn't read it then. He said to just hold on to it for later. I really got into Howard in the past several years. He is so funny and outraged at everything. Even though I know he was my dad's alter ego, I began to think of him as my little brother."

And George Lucas, director of the *Howard the Duck* film, played a part in her childhood:

"Some of my most special memories with my dad have to do with the *Star Wars* movies. He took me to the first one and I was instantly obsessed. As we were leaving he said, 'I think they will strike back.' Sure enough, we went to see *The Empire Strikes Back* when it came out. At the end I was a little worried, and he said, 'I'm sure the Jedi will return.' Well, he was right, and I was stunned that he could see that far ahead. I was sure my dad was a genius! How did he know? I thought my dad was amazing!"

Steve, who could barely change a light bulb, dove instantly into computers in the early '80s. I was shocked and asked him, "How, why?" He looked at me, raising an imperious eyebrow, as if it should be obvious. "It's *Star Trek*, not auto mechanics!" he quacked.

In 1984, when, perhaps he could have been writing the Howard movie, Gerber was otherwise engaged. He was editing and writing some of fifty—count 'em, fifty—half-hour episodes of the *G.I. Joe* animated series. We sent in the scripts to a bulletin board that he set up on a computer in his apartment. (He was one of the first in the entertainment industry to require digital submissions.)

All that work meant Sami hardly saw her father in '86. He did take her and her grandmother, Bernice, to the premiere of the movie *Howard the Duck*.

"My grandma and I shopped for outfits on Rodeo Drive," Samantha said. "When we got to the theater, I was so excited. There were crowds of people and bright lights. Dad was stressed out for some reason. In the darkened movie theater, Grandma was telling Dad how proud she was of him that he had his own movie. He really didn't want to hear it.

"When it was over, the audiences applauded and made a lot of noise. I told him I liked it, and he didn't say much about it. We went to the after-party at a nearby hotel, and I got to meet Tim Robbins. They had food and drinks, and the centerpieces on the tables were the egg from the poster with Howard's beak cracking out of it. I took one home with me. I was clutching it so hard, afraid someone would take it away.

"After my dad passed, Howard and I both lost him. I could no longer have Dad in my life, and Howard didn't have life without him. I got Howard tattooed on my ankle, but only true Howard the Duck fans would recognize him.

"Recently, Marvel contacted me, and I found out that Howard could continue on. Mary, my dad's best friend, said that my dad would want him to live on for me. I want my dad's legacy to prevail for him and the fans that still love Howard."

Is it funny or ironic that: Disney sued Marvel, Gerber sued Marvel, Lucas made the Duck movie, Disney bought Marvel, and Disney bought Lucas' seminal characters? Now, both Howard and *Star Wars* have a new lease on life.

– Mary Skrenes and Samantha Gerber
Las Vegas, NV/Folsom, CA
April 10, 2015

As a tribute to her father, Samantha Gerber got a tattoo of Howard the Duck in 2012 with the years of Steve Gerber's birth and death. The tattoo is based on the corner box from Howard the Duck *#8.*

BIOGRAPHIES

STEVE GERBER

If he had only been known for his work on *Howard the Duck*, Steve Gerber would still have been renowned as one of comics' most iconoclastic creators. After an unrewarding start as a copy writer in his native St. Louis, Gerber reached out to a fellow comics fan from his youth, Roy Thomas, and shortly thereafter began editing and writing for Marvel. He started on titles like *Iron Man*, *Sub-Mariner* and *Daredevil*, but it was his runs on *Man-Thing*, *The Defenders*, *Omega the Unknown* and *Howard the Duck* that defined his Marvel tenure as one of creative boundary pushing.

In *The Defenders* and *Omega the Unknown*, Gerber turned standard super-heroics upside down with his irreverent and sometimes inscrutable take on the genre. He took over Man-Thing shortly after the character's premiere as part of Marvel's early-'70s wave of monster titles, turning the tales of the shambling mass into a cult classic. And it was in *Man-Thing* that Gerber debuted Howard the Duck, the semi-autobiographical waterfowl that became an industry sensation and gave the writer a platform to share his sophisticated sense of humor and satire, gently and sometimes not-so-gently skewering politics, pop culture, and especially the comics industry.

A dispute over Howard with Marvel caused him to leave the company. It didn't stop him from returning to the character later in his career, but from the '80s on, his writing was mostly in animation and television, where he created *Thundarr the Barbarian* and won a Daytime Emmy as part of the team behind *The Batman/Superman Movie: World's Finest*. He also scripted *G.I. Joe*, *Transformers* and *Yu-Gi-Oh!*, as well as the *Star Trek: The Next Generation* episode "Contagion." Gerber passed away in 2008 after a battle with pulmonary fibrosis. His career accomplishments won him posthumous induction into the 2010 class of the Eisner Hall of Fame and the 2013 Bill Finger Award for Excellence in Comic Book Writing.

FRANK BRUNNER

Despite a very brief career in comics, Frank Brunner's striking combination of fantasy and realism has earned him regard as one of the great Doctor Strange artists, considered by many to be second only to Steve Ditko. As a teenage fan, Brunner was an eager letter writer to Warren's line of black-and-white magazines, so it seemed natural that some of Brunner's first professional illustration work would be in the pages of their *Vampirella*, *Creepy* and *Eerie* anthologies. The horror tales he penciled and inked and oftentimes wrote led to his first work for Marvel—adaptations of Poe's "The Cask of Amantillado" and a pair of Robert E. Howard short stories for the anthology *Chamber of Chills*. Through these lower profile titles, Marvel fans got a small taste of what was to come of Brunner's work. In the pages of *Marvel Premiere* and then *Doctor Strange*, the artist took on the Sorcerer Supreme, collaborating with writer Steve Englehart on a series of tales that are as memorable to longtime fans as the early Lee/Ditko adventures. Other notable art from this period includes his seminal work on *Howard the Duck* and "The Scarlet Citadel," a 46-page masterwork from *The Savage Sword of Conan*. A collaboration with Michael Moorcock on Elric in the pages of *Heavy Metal* followed, as did an extended run on the First Comics series *Warp*. After a long absence from comics in which Brunner worked in film and television animation, he has recently returned with a series of stunning covers to Dynamite Entertainment's *Red Sonja* and commissions through his website FrankBrunner.net.

GENE COLAN

Gene "The Dean" Colan spent his life as a comics artist perfecting a unique style that relied on realistic figure drawing and moody shadows. At a time when the norm lent itself to more abstract cartooning, Colan helped broaden the aesthetic range of what comics could look like.

Born in Brooklyn in 1926, Colan always had an interest in drawing, and he took up studies at the Art Students League of New York. Colan served his country during World War II in the Philippines, and though this delayed his art career, it eventually paid off with a solid acumen at drawing realistic scenes of warfare for DC Comics (*Our Army at War*, *All-American Men at War*) and the Atlas/Marvel titles (*Battle*, *Marines in Battle*, *Navy Combat*). Over the next 15 years, Colan would continue to work on war, romance, horror and sci-fi comics, as well as licensed titles like *Hopalong Cassidy*.

But when the super-hero genre broke wide open again in the '60s, Colan was ready to take it on with gusto. Under the pseudonym Adam Austin, he first drew Marvel Comics super heroes, including Namor, the Sub-Mariner in *Tales to Astonish* and Iron Man in *Tales of Suspense*. Colan then moved on to a celebrated run on *Doctor Strange* with Roy Thomas, and a stint on *Captain America*, but the Marvel character he is most often associated with is Daredevil. Colan's *Daredevil* pages were steeped in fluid, athletic grace for nearly every issue across an 80-issue run leading to #100. He also drew a handful of issues right before Frank Miller would come on board, Miller's *Daredevil* naturally owing a great debt to the already established visual precepts of the Colan era.

During the rest of the '70s, Colan displayed the diversity of his talents drawing the satirical *Howard the Duck* and the horror series *Tomb of Dracula*. The latter was drenched in the mysterious and shadowy style that Colan had evolved over the years, which reached its zenith in the service of Marvel's version of Count Dracula. He drew the entire 70-issue run.

Colan worked steadily into the '80s, once again drawing *Doctor Strange* for Marvel and also doing work for DC, including *Night Force*, *Silver Blade* and an extended run drawing Batman. In

2005, Colan was ushered into the Will Eisner Hall of Fame, earning well-deserved acclaim for his life's work. In 2009, Colan returned to the pages of *Captain America* to draw a World War II-based epic that would win the 2010 Eisner Award for Best Single Issue. It would prove to be his last major work in comics, as he passed away in 2011 at the age of 84.

JOHN BUSCEMA

Though primarily known for his long tenure as one of Marvel Comics' most prolific pencilers, John Buscema began his celebrated career at the age of 21 with Timely Comics. After Timely closed its in-house Bullpen, Buscema pursued comics work for a time before he left comics altogether for advertising in 1958.

When he returned to comics, however, he did so with a vengeance. Stan Lee recruited him away from advertising and quickly ensconced him into the upper ranks of Marvel artists. Picking up where *Avengers* mainstay Don Heck left off, "Big John" began what would be one of the title's definitive artistic runs. The much-anticipated *Silver Surfer* series was launched with Buscema at the helm, and top-tier books like *Fantastic Four* and *Thor* were entrusted to his care after Jack Kirby left Marvel for DC Comics.

Buscema's bold, muscular artwork commanded the comic-book page with realistic figurework that represented the next evolutionary step in post-Kirby Marvel Comics style. The respect accorded him within Marvel as an artist's artist was of such renown that he literally wrote the book on drawing, composing *How To Draw Comics the Marvel Way* with Stan Lee, the classic "how to" book in comic-book illustration.

He worked from the '70s through the '90s on nearly every title in the Marvel stable, including his personal favorite, *Conan the Barbarian*, with Roy Thomas. He retired in 1996, but returned every now and then to the comics scene until he passed away after a battle with cancer in 2002, the same year he was inducted into the Eisner Hall of Fame.

SAL BUSCEMA

Without a doubt one of comics' most prolific artists, "Our Pal" Sal Buscema joined Marvel in 1968 shortly after his elder brother, John. Tackling inking duties on *Silver Surfer* and *Fantastic Four*, including the all-time classic *Silver Surfer* #4, Buscema quickly graduated to penciling. He was an anchor of the Marvel line in the 1970s with long runs on books like *Captain America*, *Marvel Team-Up* and *The Spectacular Spider-Man* and a 100-plus issue run on *The Incredible Hulk*. Buscema was also behind defining the tone on early issues of *The Defenders*, *Rom* and *The New Mutants*. His career as one of Marvel's most versatile artists lasted throughout the '70s and into the '90s. In 1988, he returned to *The Spectacular Spider-Man* and over the next ten years penciled every issue but two from #134 through #238 (and inked the vast majority as well!) Although he retired in the late '90s, readers can still see his name on comics credits from time to time, including inking work on the cult hit *Spider-Girl*.

STEVE LEIALOHA

Since breaking into comics in the mid-'70s, Steve Leialoha has distinguished himself with a long career as an inker and sometimes penciler for Marvel, DC and other publishers. He published his first work while still in high school, submitting drawings to fanzines run by Marv Wolfman and Len Wein, later editors at Marvel Comics. This connection came in handy when, after beginning his professional career with a pair of stories in the indie title *Star*Reach*, Leialoha was given a shot at art finishes on Jim Starlin's historic *Warlock* run. Inking Starlin's pencils helped ease him into an industry where he would come to lend his talents to a wide range of books from *Marvel Team-Up* and *Howard the Duck* to *Star Wars* and *New Mutants*. He is perhaps best known to fandom of that era for his distinctive pencil art on *Spider-Woman* and the light-hearted fantasy of *X-Men Annual* #8. From the '90s on, Steve did work for DC titles including *JLI*, *Batman* and *Sandman*. He is currently the longstanding inker on the hit Vertigo title *Fables*. Steve lives in San Francisco with his partner, cartoonist Trina Robbins.

VAL MAYERIK

Val Mayerik was born in the steel town of Youngstown, Ohio, and worked in the mills to earn money for college. His artist friend and mentor Dan Adkins opened the door for him at Marvel, where he quickly found work drawing Thongor the Barbarian in *Creatures on the Loose*, as well as adaptations of John Jakes' Brak the Barbarian in *Chamber of Chills* and H.G. Wells' Invisible Man in *Supernatural Thrillers*. In addition to his regular work on Thongor, Mayerik illustrated the macabre Man-Thing in *Fear*, and would carry on drawing into the character's self-titled series in 1974. Mayerik quickly became a key contributor to Marvel's early '70s horror revival, augmenting his Man-Thing work with *Frankenstein* and the Living Mummy in *Supernatural Thrillers*. It was in the 19th issue of *Fear* that Mayerik would co-create one of comics' most unusual and memorable characters, Howard the Duck. In 1976, Mayerik began a six-issue stint drawing *Ka-Zar*, a title he would return to in 1982 for the "Tales of Zabu" backup. In between penciling assignments, Mayerik inked a host of comics as well. Mayerik also had an interest in acting, starring in the low-budget horror film *The Demon Lover* in 1977 and acting off-Broadway. By the early '90s, Mayerik was drawing various Punisher series and *Bruce Lee*, a six-issue 1994 series from Malibu, but he had begun to transition to work in advertising. He returned to comics in 2015 after successfully funding a Kickstarter initiative to draw *Of Dust and Blood*, an original graphic novel about Little Big Horn.

Biographies researched and written by John Rhett Thomas

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THE GOLDEN AGE

As the Great Depression wore on and the specter of war hung over America, a new storytelling medium was born: the comic book. Within their four-color pages, larger-than-life super heroes could make short work of America's foes, giving readers of all ages hope for victory against the real-life enemies that faced the United States. At the forefront of this new medium was Timely Comics, a young company staffed by such legendary creators as Carl Burgos, Bill Everett, Joe Simon, Jack Kirby and Stan Lee. These trailblazing talents birthed a vast array of characters that would give rise to the Marvel Universe!

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GOLDEN AGE MYSTIC COMICS VOL. 1
GOLDEN AGE SUB-MARINER VOLS. 1-3
GOLDEN AGE U.S.A. COMICS VOLS. 1-2
GOLDEN AGE YOUNG ALLIES VOLS. 1-2

THE ATLAS ERA

Seeing super heroes waning, Timely Comics evolved into Atlas Comics and took on a vast new range of genres: science-fiction tales of outer space adventures; realistic war comics; buxom jungle heroines; horror comics that would become the center of a moral panic that rocked the industry; and romance comics for the emerging teen audience. Even the classic costumed heroes of the Golden Age retooled to take on the threat of Communism. From Western gunfighters to crime to horror, the Atlas Era had it all!

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ATLAS ERA BLACK KNIGHT/YELLOW CLAW VOL. 1
ATLAS ERA HEROES VOLS. 1-3
ATLAS ERA JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY VOLS. 1-4
ATLAS ERA JUNGLE ADVENTURE VOLS. 1-3
ATLAS ERA MENACE VOL. 1
ATLAS ERA STRANGE TALES VOLS. 1-6
ATLAS ERA TALES TO ASTONISH VOLS. 1-4
ATLAS ERA TALES OF SUSPENSE VOLS. 1-4
ATLAS ERA VENUS VOL. 1

THE MARVEL AGE

In August 1961, change hit newsstands: *The Fantastic Four* #1 did not feature the squeaky-clean heroes of yesteryear. They were real characters placed in extraordinary circumstances. They lived together, they fought among themselves — and sometimes, they even lost to the bad guys. This was more than a change in attitude: It was the beginning of something entirely different — the beginning of the Marvel Age of Comics!

Thanks to the fertile imaginations of Stan Lee, Jack Kirby, Steve Ditko and others, an unending list of heroes followed the FF with ever-increasing acclaim and popularity: the Amazing Spider-Man, the Mighty Thor, the Incredible Hulk, Daredevil, Iron Man and the X-Men, to name but a few. These were the Marvel heroes, born of conflict and a continuous struggle to balance human lives with superhuman responsibilities.

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HOWARD THE DUCK VOL. 1
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THE INHUMANS VOLS. 1-2
THE INVINCIBLE IRON MAN VOLS. 1-13
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KILLRAVEN VOL. 1
LUKE CAGE VOLS. 1-3
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MARVEL TEAM-UP VOLS. 1-5
MARVEL TWO-IN-ONE VOLS. 1-5
THE MIGHTY THOR VOLS. 1-19
MS. MARVEL VOLS. 1-2
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NOT BRAND ECHH VOL. 1
RAWHIDE KID VOLS. 1-2
THE SAVAGE SHE-HULK VOLS. 1-2
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THE SILVER SURFER VOLS. 1-2
THE SUB-MARINER VOLS. 1-8
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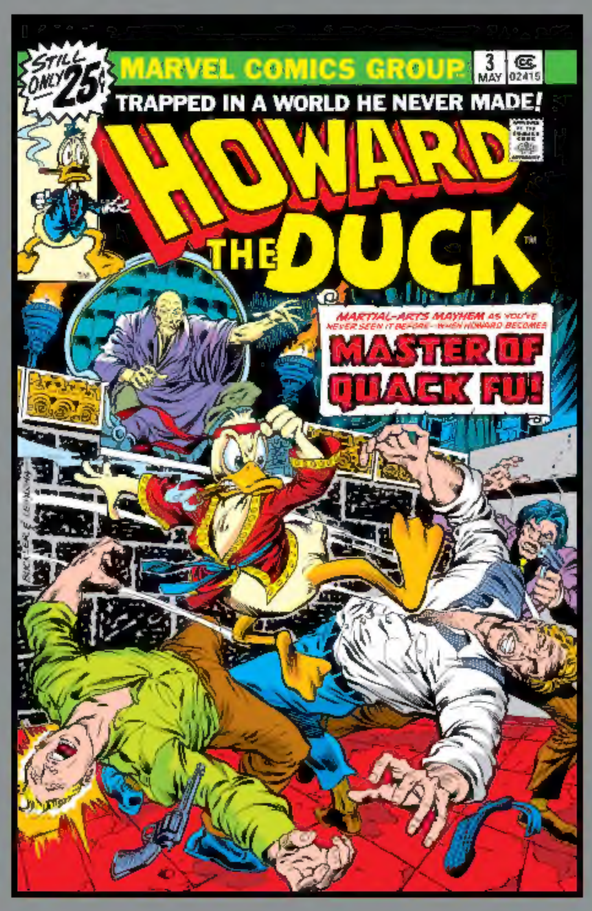
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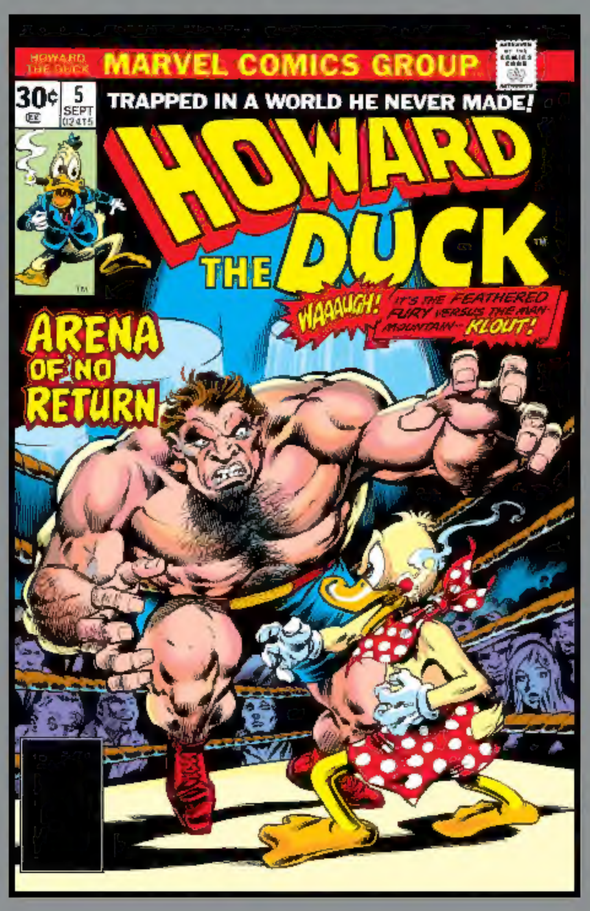
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